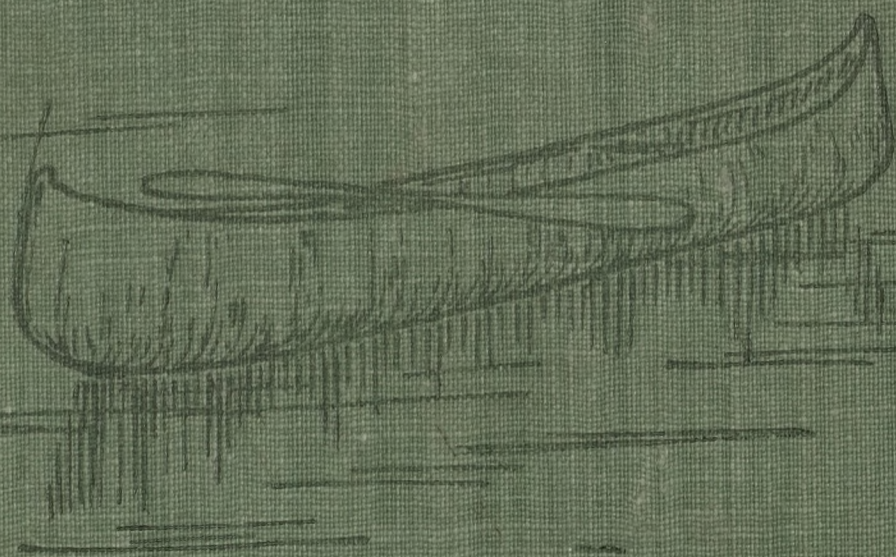


AN ADIRONDACK ROMANCE



BY

CAROLINE WASHBURN ROCKWOOD.

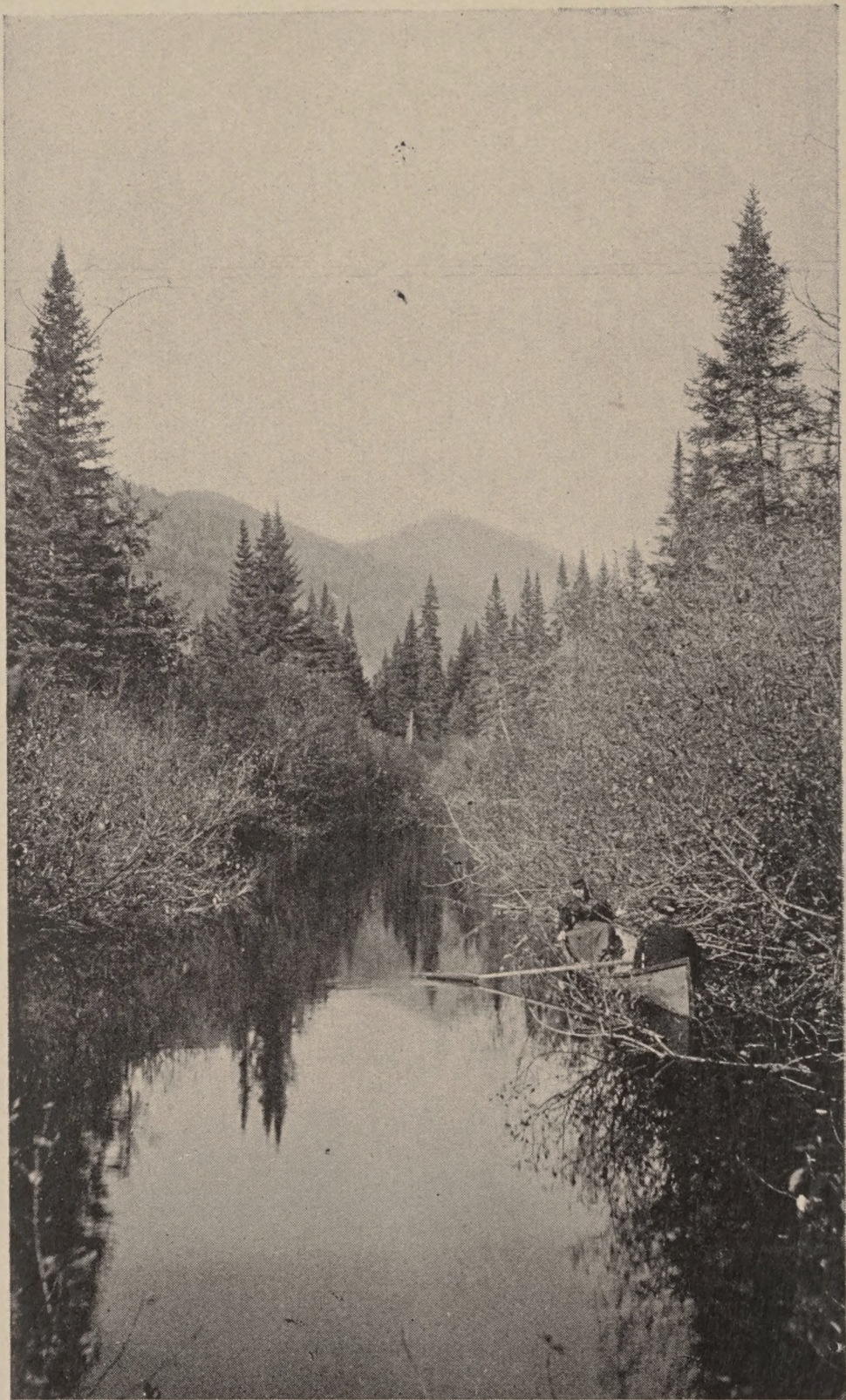
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FRONTISPIECE.

“Excursions by Water.”

AN
ADIRONDACK ROMANCE



BY

CAROLINE WASHBURN ROCKWOOD

AUTHOR OF

"A Saratoga Romance," "In Biscayne Bay,"

"An East Florida Romance," Etc.



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BY

CAROLINE WASHBURN ROCKWOOD

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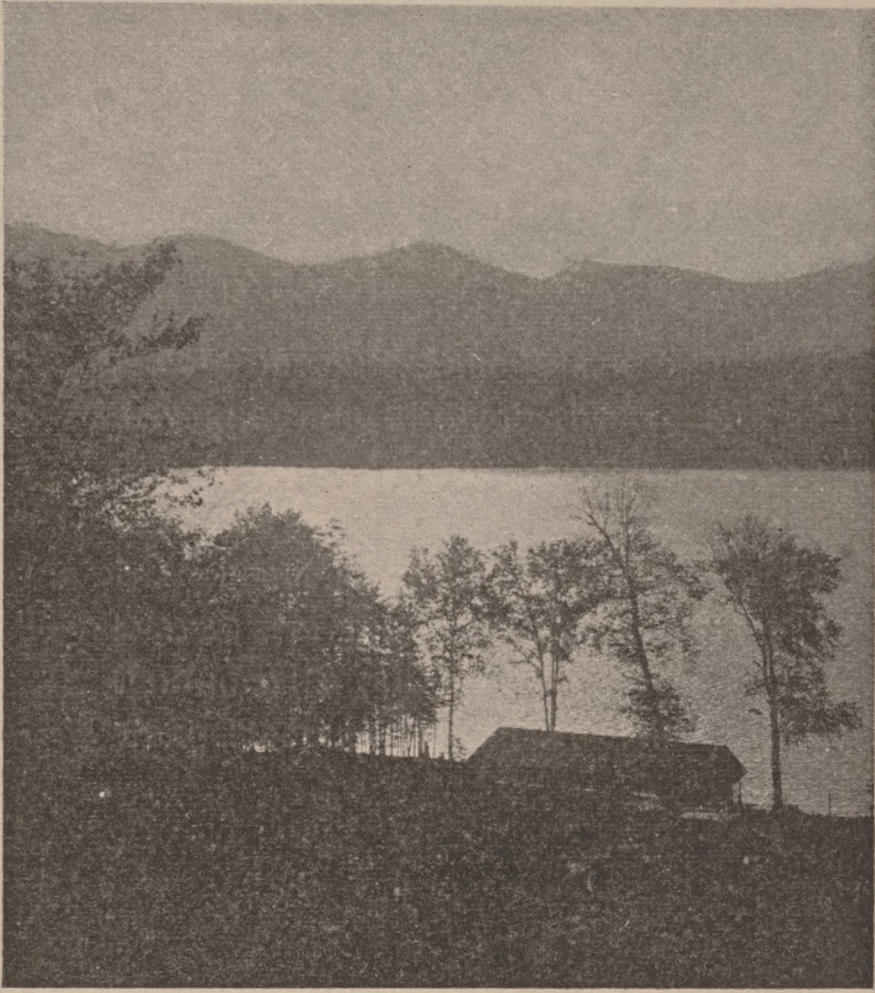
ILLUSTRATIONS.

FRONTISPIECE.

LAKE PLACID.

SARANAC LAKE.

"Where hill and lake and sky," etc.,	-	-	-	21	✓
Saranac Inn,	-	-	-	29	✓
Restful Waubeek,	-	-	-	39	✓
Blossom Bungalow,	-	-	-	42	✓
Across the Upper Saranac,	-	-	-	49	✓
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Paul Smith's,	-	-	-	88	✓
Camp life at Paul Smith's,	-	-	-	92	✓
A day's excursion,	-	-	-	104	✓
"What do you say to landing on this point?"	-	-	-	111	✓
The Stevens House,	-	-	-	137	✓
Jolly White Face Inn,	-	-	-	139	✓
"Across the leafy ocean peeped the Ruisseaumont,"	-	-	-	140	✓
"There gleamed the Massawepie and beyond stretched Childwold,"	-	-	-	143	✓
"A last pull on the Lake,"	-	-	-	180	✓



PHOTO, K. E. MCCLELLAN

Below, moonlit Lake Placid
Lay glist'ning through the trees.
The fragrant balsams rustled
Caressed by passing breeze ;
A thousand fleeting shadows
Played o'er the fairy scene,
Veiling with tender graces
Each sleeping slope between.



PHOTO, K. E. MCCLELLAN.

SARANAC LAKE

AN ADIRONDACK ROMANCE.

I.

FAITH HOLLAND was dazed.

All through her girlhood she had longed, watched and waited for something, anything that might deliver her from the dead level monotony of her New England life.

She had built air-castles and dreamed dreams ; had bravely carried the burdens of genteel poverty and cheerfully accepted the sacrifices consequent upon an inheritance involving the obligations of an aristocrat, but furnishing an income better suited to the needs of obscurity.

A natural independence, force of character and sunniness of disposition had made her triumphant over petty trials, strong in endurance and patient with the numerous demands made upon her by uncongenial surroundings, but always underneath her thoughts and acts—like a strong current of wind helping on to its destination an ambitious bird—

existed the almost fierce determination to work out a broad and brilliant destiny for herself and for the one object of her adoration, her mother.

And now—without slightest premonition or warning, old Jackson had quietly dropped into her strangely apathetic hands the key to all her aspirations, and she had accepted it with no more interest or excitement than if it had been the grocer's bill or the announcement that the reading club would next meet at Mrs. Green's.

Carelessly tearing open the envelope, she had glanced at the business sheet, looked puzzled, read the signature, and then with sudden exactness and intentness had carefully scanned every word, from the formal address to the equally ceremonious close.

Then she let the letter fall from her grasp, through very weakness, as the amazing contents burned into her whirling brain, making her feel as one who, in a dream, clutches at a treasure with the double consciousness that pronounces it but an illusion.

“Oh, if it *should* be some other girl,” she suddenly thought, and the color fled from lips and cheek as she stooped for the sheet and again closely examined each detail, turning to the envelope for further justification of her new hopes.

“No! there is no doubt about it. It is my name and can mean no one in this world but me. At last I can really live. Change, action, opportunities to see the world, to know delightful people, to have beautiful things, to make everybody comfortable and happy, are mine—and mother’s.”

At this point in her tumultuous self-communion she suddenly sprang to her feet and flew across the room to a little mirror that hung over an old-fashioned dressing-table, and peered into its depths with eager, curious scrutiny.

The mirror hung high and revealed only two deeply set hazel eyes ablaze with excitement, a somewhat dark complexion, a forehead quite too broad and high to be classic, surmounted by a burden of chestnut hair, cheeks that needed filling out, and a mouth that evidenced a determined as well as mercurial nature, and reflected the vivid, constantly changing glow that suffused the oval face.

Evidently the picture did not please Faith Holland.

Shaking her finger at it she denounced it roundly after a fashion born of much solitude.

“Oh, you red-faced, common-place looking crea-

ture. Why must you be so absolutely uninteresting when so much has come to you ?”

Standing back from the mirror, that she might see more of her figure, she grew yet more scornful, pressing her forefinger against her under lip and throwing her head on one side as she silently marked the thinness of her neck and arms and the general lack of roundness and curve.

“What a stick !—Well, much is possible to science and art and—who knows ! I may yet pose as the beautiful Miss Holland.” Laughing aloud at the thought she made a low courtesy to the bright face in the glass, turned from it suddenly as if possessed with a new purpose, and danced out of the room with the evident intention of at once carrying it out.

Through the long hall, down the steep narrow stairway, to the library of the old country house that had always been her home, she swiftly passed, throwing open the door with a quick noiseless grasp of its brass knob, and pausing for an instant on the threshold.

Outside, the gray chill of a late March afternoon hung over the landscape and an ominous east wind moaned about the corners of the house, rattling

the naked tree branches and ghostly shrubbery against each other.

Within all was cheery, cosy and warm.

A bright fire glowed on the open hearth. Before it was stretched Max, Faith's great St. Bernard—his splendidly colored and powerful proportions giving a dignity to the plainly furnished room. Potted plants filled the southern windows and carefully trained vines twined luxuriantly over the picture-frames and brackets. One side of the room was entirely given up to books, and on the other side stood Faith's piano.

Before the library table, silhouetted against the fast waning daylight, sat a slender figure with head bent and fingers working rapidly.

Faith sprang to its side with a little cry of joy and tenderness.

"Darling, darling—it has come! Sweet, patient, precious heart—you shall have everything now. No more hard work—no more anxiety—no more lying awake at night planning ways and means to barely live respectably in this tiresome old place. Everybody shall see how lovely you are."

Impetuous kisses upon hair, face and hands interrupted the ardent outburst, and Faith finally climaxed her entirely surprising behavior by throw-

ing her arms around her mother, sinking on her knees at her side and hiding her face on the shoulder that had always been her haven of rest, while hysterical sobs and tears relieved the tension of her over-wrought nerves.

In vain did her mother endeavor to calm her. In vain did she beg for an explanation of her strange excitement. Never had she seen her like that before.

All she could do was to wait until the tempest passed.

For a few moments nothing was heard in the darkening room but the crackling of the fire, the sub-growlings of Max as he dreamed of canine quarrels, and the gradually controlled breathing of the young girl.

Mrs. Holland's perplexity and anxiety were beginning to tell upon her, and as a last resort she pleaded her own weariness.

It proved the quickest and surest way to her child's composure.

"How selfish I am!" she cried, raising her head and caressing the sweet face on a level with her own. "But I could not bear so much joy all at once. You and I have been trained to bear everything but joy, haven't we, darling? And when

Jackson handed me this long envelope I supposed it contained some manuscript returned, and crept upstairs with it, determined that you should not be bothered to-day, at any rate, for I knew you were hard at work. Just think ! I never even read the address until after I finished putting some things away, and I was so surprised to find it was for me." She smiled now, as she held the letter up, trying to wisely prepare her mother for what had so undone her own self-control.

"Then I examined the handwriting, and the post-mark, and the address that the letter was to be returned to if not called for within ten days. Here it is. Do you know Richard Patton, Counsellor-at-Law, No. — Court Square, Boston? No? And directed to me, dear—see? 'MISS FAITH HOLLAND, STURBRIDGE, MASS.' Do not grow pale. There is nothing but good news in this letter, and now I will read it to you.

" ' BOSTON, March 28, 189—.

" ' *Miss Faith Holland,*

" ' DEAR MADAM :—I beg to inform you that my late client, Mr. Leigh Wadsworth, of this city, before his departure for India ten years ago, made his will and left it in my keeping with orders to

retain it until his return, or, in case of his death, to carry out its directions promptly.

“ ‘ A letter dated January 30th has reached me to-day, announcing Mr. Wadsworth’s sudden death from malignant fever, and his burial by English friends, at Bombay.

“ ‘ It now remains for me to follow his wishes as contained in his will, which makes you his residuary legatee, appointing your mother as sole guardian and executrix without bonds, and expressing but one contingency for your consideration, which the copy of the will, enclosed with this letter, explains.

“ ‘ As there is no one to interfere with your immediate possession of your inheritance, after probating the will, I hold myself in readiness to place in your mother’s hands all papers connected with the property, the income from which is much more than you are at all likely to spend.

“ ‘ Awaiting your instructions, I remain,

“ ‘ Yours respectfully,

“ ‘ RICHARD PATTON.’ ”

As Faith finished reading, she turned eagerly to her mother, expecting to see amazement and delight in her face, and to hear words of explanation and congratulation, but all her own enthusi-

asm fell from her like a useless garment as she looked.

Her mother's head was thrown back against the chair. Her eyes were full of tears that chased each other over her flushed cheeks and dropped unheeded on her hands. Her lips, rosy and parted like a child's, quivered with emotion that seemed to vibrate through her whole being, but underneath all the agitation Faith recognized an unmistakable and tender, though regretful relief; a sad but deep gratitude which seemed in no way connected with the material gain of this remarkable bequest, and which also, in a subtle, indefinable way, hushed any questioning.

All she dared do was to caress the pretty hands and silently watch the finely chiseled face as it slowly regained its usual expression.

At last, with a long, deep sigh, Miriam Holland aroused herself, and taking her daughter's face between her hands, earnestly gazed into her puzzled eyes.

"Dear one," she said, "I am so glad for you—so glad. It seems like a fairy-tale. You cannot understand all, for I cannot tell you the whole story, but Mr. Wadsworth was one of my earliest and best friends. He had a very generous heart,

and I was—obliged—to wound it. I never knew until now that he quite forgave me, and—it is a relief—a happiness.”

She looked so young, so winsome and pathetic.

Faith had never seen any woman she thought half so charming as the young mother who had always been her closest companion, and now she experienced, for the first time, the thrill of joy that accompanies a new and entirely unlooked-for and practically unlimited power to lavish upon this loved object every material luxury and pleasure.

“Be happy then, sweet little mother. Put away your work and let us talk. Oh, what a different world this seems now. I feel like flying away with you and doing a thousand things at once.”

II.

MIRIAM HOLLAND, sitting in the firelight, looked younger and more frail than she really was.

The golden hair, delicate complexion and general grace of outline suggested a maturity that at thirty-eight was but attaining its perfection, while the kindly shadows concealed evidences of an intensity and ripe intellectuality that a clearer view of the lofty brow, sensitive nostrils and firmly lined mouth would have revealed.

For years she had fought her own battles with the world and won from them, single-handed and alone, a now constantly increasing reputation and income.

It would have been no grief to her to have gone on in the same quiet earnest ways to the end of her days, so she could earn enough to keep the dear old house, in which her modest and somewhat conservative taste found ample scope for all its home-making instincts, and satisfactorily provide for her child's present and future.

She loved the cheerful work-room, her book-companions and all the details of her pen-work, which supplied both zest and maintenance to her life. As one after another of her dainty stories met with encouraging appreciation, her desire to soar higher in literary achievement increased ; and Faith often found her with flushed cheeks, so intensely absorbed in her writing, that she was utterly oblivious of having been at her desk for hours and almost resentful of even her daughter's loving interruption.

She had never known very much of the great hurrying world and could hardly remember the father and mother whose early loss left her to the brooding care of her mother's sister, a gentle, loving soul, high-bred and as puritanic as her inborn loving-kindness permitted, who felt her work well, if regretfully, completed, when Gilbert Holland, handsome, fascinating and well endowed with this world's goods, laid ardent siege to her niece's heart, with quick success.

He, too, was the last of his family, and although generation after generation of Hollands had been born, lived and died in the house where his widow and daughter afterward were discovered by fortune's favors, at the time of his marriage he took his young bride to the city.

For two years no shadow clouded their happiness except the passing away of Miriam's Aunt Mercy, who daily gave thanks for the providential arrangement that relieved her of the fears of leaving her niece alone in the world.

Then business losses, months of great anxiety and the hand of sudden and acute disease laid low all those bright hopes, and left Miriam Holland alone in the bitterest sense of that bitter word, except for the one link to life—little Faith.

When the very sunlight seemed to mock her desolation, she would lie on her lounge and let the soft hands pat her cheeks and the little downy head lie on her aching heart.

It mitigated a little the terrible strain to hold the dimpled form close in her arms, and with every hour of their lives the young mother and her child grew more and more indispensable to each other, until returning strength and that implacable and often misunderstood friend, necessity, revealed ways of peace and hope through the very financial losses that made personal effort a duty. It was then that Miriam Holland went back to the old country homestead and took up her pen, as her weapon in the battle for independence.

* * * * *

Faith was built upon a large scale like her father, and, like him, was as impulsive and generous as she was affectionate. She worshipped her "beauty mother" all through her babyhood, was her constant companion through her girlhood, and now, in her eighteenth year, held nothing of value that did not include her mother's happiness.

She knew little of the world beyond the few personal friends admitted to her home, the church life and such glimpses of art and literature as could be obtained from school, lectures, concerts and books. Short trips to Boston and one summer's tour through the White Mountains made up the sum-total of her journeyings, for the income saved from her father's property had hardly more than sufficed to pay the taxes on house and land, and her mother's earnings had demanded the most prudent management to cover the expenses of their daily living.

And so it came to pass that out of their cramped circumstances had grown a sweet and eager watchfulness for each other's weal that many a mother and daughter, weighed down by pomps and vanities, secretly envied, and now that they were to be tested by the too often deadening touch of prosperity, it remained to be seen whether the self-forgetfulness

that had hitherto crowned their darkest times with patience and fortitude would still triumph over the insatiate demon Self, and, making wings of opportunity, soar higher and higher in the attainment of life's true values.

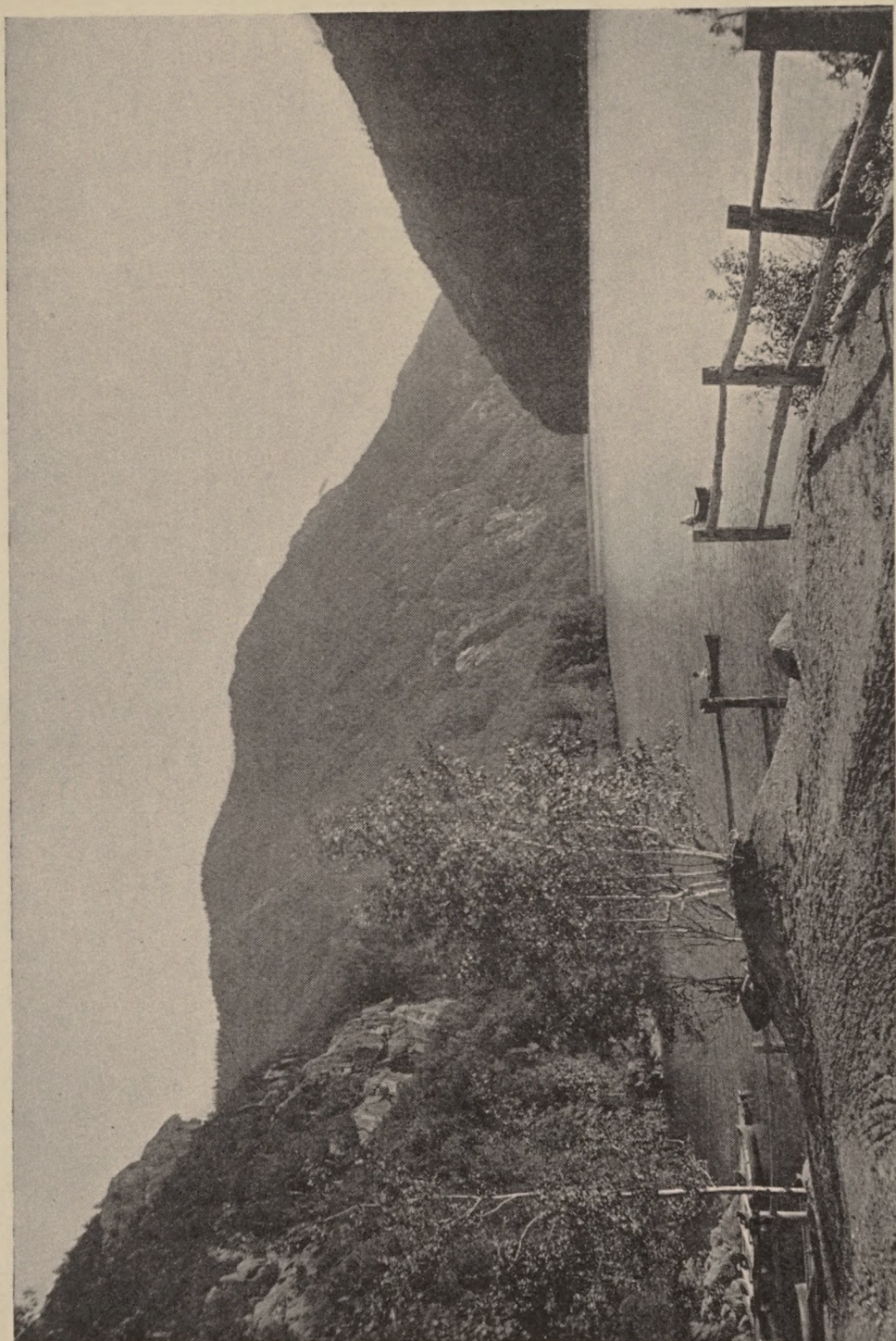
* * * * *

The first result of Faith's inheritance was soon felt.

Mother and daughter seemed temporarily to change places with each other.

Faith with the mercurial adjustment of youth and inexperience lost no time in grasping the new conditions. Her mother seemed strangely and alarmingly weakened and undone by good fortune, as she never had been by all the blows of adversity. She laughed at her "laziness" as she called her inability to make any exertion, and said Faith would spoil her, but the latter quietly took matters into her own hands, and with the judicious assistance of Richard Patton mapped out a plan for the spring and summer months, that included an early flitting from New England east winds to milder surroundings and a subsequent Adirondack season, having for its starting point and headquarters the upper Saranac, supplemented by its tributaries of

rivers, bays, and neighboring forests ; excursions north, south, east, and west ; boating, fishing, hunting, and all that goes to making over a worn out and depleted body and a too hardly tried spirit into the renewed and gladsome embodiment of health and strength.



PHOTO, K. E. MCCLELLAN.

“Where hill and lake and sky reflect a godlike peace.”

III.

“TAKE her to some place where she will be high and dry, with water before her and forests behind her ; where she can have every comfort and luxury that her body craves and the tonic of undulterated nature so close at hand that she will not realize where the dividing line lies,” said the famous physician summoned by Faith when she did not know what was best to do.

“And above all things go where she will see no invalids, hear no gloomy dissertations upon physical ills and feel no temptation to sympathize with anybody,” he added, as he left.

“How in the world am I to find such a place ?” thought Faith anxiously ; but she never paused in her investigation of guide-books, people and other sources of information until one glorious July morning, armed with irresistible arguments,—for Mrs. Holland was quite content to spend the summer by the ocean, where they had been for a month,—she opened her loving siege.

“Mother, darling, I’m tired of this place, and the Deans are going to the Adirondacks next week. Why not go with them? You like Mrs. Dean, and the girls are always good company.”

“But you do not know anything about the Adirondacks, dearie, and I’m not equal to roughing it,” answered Mrs. Holland, inwardly hoping that she might stay just where she was until the autumn drove them home.

“Oh, yes, indeed I do know a great deal about the Adirondacks,” cried Faith, settling herself comfortably by her mother and preparing for a clear and final discussion of the plans already fully decided upon in her own mind. “You see I have taken a great deal of trouble to learn all about the best places there. Look at all these books, and these letters, and here are a lot of photographs that came this morning. I sent to Rutland, Vermont, for that set. The photographer lives there—Chandler—but a man here who goes to Childwold Park every summer gave me his address.

“That package is from the author of this cunning little guide-book, ‘THE ADIRONDACKS, ILLUSTRATED.’ He is a wonderfully clever man—photographer, lecturer, and writes books. His

name is Stoddard and he lives in Glens Falls, New York.

“ Then there are the Bigelows, who have spent season after season up there, moving about from place to place, and Mrs. Bigelow says you can be exactly as comfortable or as uncomfortable as you please. You can live in a fine modern hotel and not find anything lacking that you get in the city palaces, or you can go to small and unpretentious houses where bed and board are good, but you do most of your own waiting, or all of it. Then there are all sorts of camps, just as there are cottages here, and after that comes regular ‘roughing’ through wild regions with guides.

“ Now this is what *we* should do. Go to New York Monday, quite at our leisure, any time we please, stay over night at your favorite hotel, and take the train the next morning from the Grand Central Station for Saranac Inn, on the Adirondack branch of the New York Central Railroad.

“ Grace Bigelow says the whole ride is enchanting up the Hudson and through the lovely Mohawk Valley right into the country and woods. Oh, dearest ! do you not long to smell the pines and see the mountains ? I do. You can lie on a

lounge all the way and just feast your eyes. Then we get out at Saranac Inn Station and coach right through the woods for two miles to the Inn, where we have supper and stay over night."

"I thought the Bigelows said that the Inn was a charming old place with a beautiful view and the very choicest patronage. Why not stay there?" asked Mrs. Holland.

"Because you are ordered to go where you can be on high ground, and I am told that the Wawbeek stands higher above and nearer to the lake than any other hotel. The upper Saranac is nine miles long. Saranac Inn is at its northern end and the Wawbeek is near the southern end. We take a steamer for the lake journey, and, dearest, if you are willing, we will go right into a cottage next the hotel. Here is a photograph of it. You can be as quiet or as gay as you like there, and have no more care than if we lived in a hotel. Indeed"—with a bright beguiling smile—"I have had the refusal of it ever since April."

Mrs. Holland could not resist her child's enthusiasm nor question the evidently well-planned arrangement; so putting aside any lingering regrets, she acquiesced, at least cheerfully, only stipulating that the Deans should be invited to

share the cottage—"for they will be agreeable companions, and the young people will make your summering much more cheerful than it would be alone with me."

After properly resenting the implication involved in her mother's modest platform, Faith, with her usual impetuosity, ran away to confer with the Deans, and finding them glad to accept so pleasant an offer, proceeded at once with the necessary preparations.

So it came to pass that on the twelfth of July, the party of six, with maids and baggage, found themselves borne luxuriously along the shores of the majestic Hudson, through old Albany with its monument of political extravagance; through all the quaint Dutch towns of the Mohawk Valley, pausing at Utica, the little city of more classic name than appearance, to see crowds of men, women and children crush into the cars, laden with camping outfits, and exchanging about the same salutations that meet the ear on any of the beaches.

"Have you been in before?"

"Are you just going in?"

"Will you stay in long?" etc.

"How funny!" said Faith to Jack Dean, a big,

burly fellow just out of Harvard. "What do they mean?"

"That is the proper term; in and out signify entering or leaving the Adirondack region," he answered as they stopped in their tramp up and down the platform to watch a noisy group of boys as they pushed their way through the throng with less courtesy than vigor, but with such enthusiasm that no one could look into their happy faces and bear them any malice, even if they did happen to get jostled.

"Got your guide?" asked one city sport of another, who evidently had just come out to meet him.

"Yes, he's waiting for us at Paul's, and what he doesn't know about the woods don't count. Hurry up. The train is starting."

Off it puffed—out of the heat, and glare, and dust, and jangle of the cities, through the velvet-carpeted fields and mossy meadows, steadily up-grade, among the foot-hills and shadowed balsam-scented woods, with glimpses of farm-life, country homes, stretches of silent forests, lonely cabins, the more modern stations at intervals—with a logging-camp near by, and hundreds of crystal rivulets, ponds and lakes studding the emerald reaches, until, just

as the sun went down behind the tall pines, they were released from their confinement and stepped out upon the Saranac Inn Station platform, to find "Eli" and the Tally-ho ready for the next stage of the journey.

"What delicious odors!" exclaimed Mrs. Holland as she breathed deep and long of the pure fragrance. "I must ride on top and get all I possibly can of it. Yes, dear; I would not miss it for anything."

Faith could scarcely credit her ears. Her delicate, timid mother insisting upon being helped to the top of the coach when twenty-four hours before no inducement could have dragged her, willingly, from her lounge.

"What will the end be if this is only the beginning?" she thought, but sensible Jack's matter-of-fact voice saved her from making a fatal mistake.

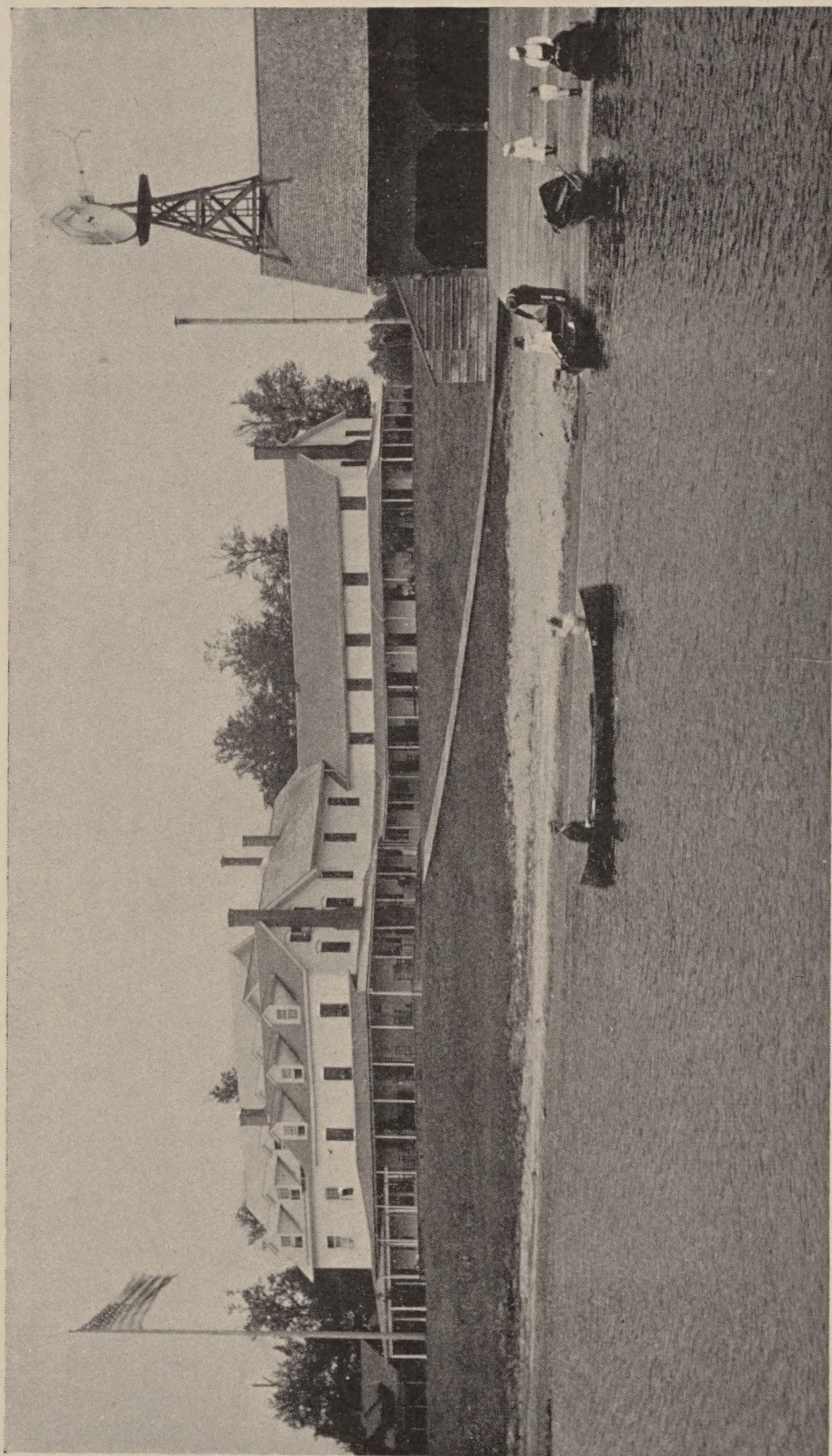
"Of course you are going on top, Mrs. Holland. Where else would anybody go, that could help themselves? Just trust me. I'll sit next to you and keep you steady. Everybody has to get used to these mountain roads, you know. There! now, Miss Faith, you take the other side. Mother, you and the girls will just fill the next seat. So. Now we are all right. Go ahead, Eli."

What a heavenly calm ; what an abiding peace, in those whispering pines, white-robed birches and feathery undergrowths !

How suddenly and how absolutely blotted out of remembrance the outside world with its cares, pleasures and responsibilities !

How impossible to hate or to haste, with such stately and time-honored companionship !

And so Faith Holland and her party went in to the two months of experience, new, unexpected and curiously varied.



Saranac Inn.—“Dear to many generations.”

IV.

THE first glimpse of Saranac Inn, with its old-fashioned and now comparatively inconspicuous original buildings, outnumbered and overtopped by more modern and roomy additions ; its charming old-time gardens and woodland background, with the lake spread before it, across which Whiteface, Ampersand and Seward, with a whole battalion of foot-hills rest against the eastern horizon like veterans taking a well-earned season of repose, while to the North the St. Regis Mountains keep dignified guard over the island-dotted Upper Saranac as it gleams away to the southward a good eight miles—acted like an electric shock upon Faith, whose nature responded keenly to beauty in any form, and whose fresh, inexperienced enthusiasm seemed to Jack Dean only less fascinating than her absolute unconsciousness of self.

“ OH ! OH ! OH ! ” she cried, as the coach swung out of the forest-road onto the circling drive-way before the Inn.

“ Be careful, Faith ; you will fall off. Do sit

down, dear," begged her mother, clutching at the girl's skirts desperately.

"But did you ever see anything half so entrancing as those mountains flooded in this soft, rosy light?"—for out of the woods the sun still held sway, although shorn of its fierceness and just sinking behind the horizon.

"Better economize your superlatives, Miss Faith. This is fine, and no mistake, but it is your first look and you've a good many more before you," said Jack, as he passed his long arm behind Mrs. Holland and quietly but firmly laid a restraining hand upon the field-glass strap that was securely fastened across Faith's back.

Faith had neither eyes nor ears for him at that moment, but the realization of being conspicuous, as Eli brought the coach around to the side of the hotel with a grand flourish, necessitated a sudden resumption of her seat, and very soon the entire party were comfortably quartered in their respective rooms, impatient for the good supper awaiting them, and full of wonder and delight over the new life and vigor that seemed to have taken possession of their erstwhile invalid, Mrs. Holland.

"Just look at her," whispered Faith to Emma Dean. "Would you ever believe it? I couldn't

induce her to have her supper sent up to her room. Doesn't she look too sweet with that pink in her cheeks? Oh, I knew mountain air was what she needed."

The next morning the entire party met at an unusually early and most bountiful breakfast, with appetites that Jack Dean declared "nothing seemed to touch."

"It is honest hunger born of pure air and nature's healing quiet," said Mrs. Holland, proudly calling for a third snowy biscuit.

She had gained enough flesh and color during the spring and early summer to make her fair type of beauty wonderfully youthful and fresh, while to Faith every day seemed to bring a new charm.

Her mother had told her a few weeks before that she desired a photograph of her before she went into the woods, that the change made during the summer might be appreciated. "For if you gain as rapidly for the next few months as you have the last, you will be obliged to diet."

Faith laughed. "The idea of my ever being stout! It seems too absurd—but really, mother, darling, it frightens me to be so perfectly happy. Sometimes I dream that all this new life *is* only a dream, and I awake crying. It was hard enough

to bear things before we ever knew freedom from anxiety, but now ! Heavens ! it would be too horrible to have to go back. Dear," and the girl's voice actually trembled, "you know the one request that the will made,—suppose anything ever should happen that would compel a choice between honor and fortune : do you think it ever can come to that ?"

Mrs. Holland's face looked serious.

"If it should, Faith, will it not be time enough to face the test when it is made ? Don't shadow the present with the fear of what I see no sort of danger of ever happening."

* * * * *

On this July morning, no girl in all the woods seemed more blithe than Faith as she started off for a tramp with the Dean girls and their brother, the mothers preferring to sit on the piazza and feast their eyes without effort.

The Dean girls were stately in height and bearing, overtopping Faith by an inch or two. They were handsome, genial, sensible young women of sterling qualities, varied accomplishments and affectionate natures. Margaret, or, as every one called her, "Daisy," was the elder and the stronger of the two, and naturally took the lead, but Emma

was her complete counterpart, and neither seemed content without the other.

Jack Dean was their step-brother, whose devotion was essential and as unquestioned as their mother's. Most people thought him Mr. Dean's son, the second marriage of his mother having taken place when he was a tiny boy, and the relations between his step-father and himself having always been exceedingly close and tender, including also his legal adoption and change of name.

Neither Faith nor her mother knew the Deans prior to their sea-side acquaintance of several weeks ; but propinquity, mutual friends and kindred tastes had forced an unusually confidential and pleasant feeling between both the seniors and juniors of the two families, and the plan of continuing their intercourse through the summer was mutually acceptable.

Mrs. Dean was a typical American gentlewoman of the conservative, energetic order, who carried her responsibilities as guardian of her children, and manager of her own and their large financial interests, with good judgment and a success born of rather exceptional commercial instincts.

Quite naturally Mrs. Holland found her experience and advice valuable in many ways, especially

as both women were equally desirous of gaining the golden medium between generous and gracious liberality and anything in the least approaching vulgar ostentation.

If Jack Dean found Faith Holland a degree more interesting than his sisters—on occasions—he did not yet realize it, nor did they.

As for Faith, she had seen little of men, old or young, and while she liked Jack and was glad he was big and strong and good-looking—as girls choose their men friends to be,—and felt a certain sense of protection and dignity in having him one of the party, she did not prefer his company to that of his sisters except when it was a question of needing his help at the sail, oar or rein.

Sea-shore life does not develop intimacy between young people so rapidly as do woodland solitudes and mountain tramps.

It is a question, if Faith Holland and Jack Dean could have looked forward even a short six weeks, on that morning in early July, whether either of them would have gone any further “in”—but no thought of sentiment troubled them as they strolled down the shore-road past the pretty camps, and climbed the hill to the rustic church, before returning to the Inn.

The "Saranac" left the landing for its southern lake trip at half-past two, and every moment of the time spent en route to the Wawbeek Hotel was a delight.

The neat little mail-bags belonging to the various camps were delivered, in turn, by genial John Clark, the popular purser, and the Captain liked nothing better than answering questions and giving information.

They stopped for a moment at the Ward camp, to let a tiny, curly-headed boy, followed by his comparatively immense dog, make a pretty pretense of carrying the mail-bag up the rocky pathway, assisted, when necessary, by more mature strength.

Then they steamed down the lake and around a heavily wooded point to the Warren, Nichol, Howell and Jackson camps—a rustic frontage of picturesque summer homes that always captivates the tourist's fancy.

Another curve brought the "Saranac" in sight of the spacious Swenson camp, so quaintly simple without and attractive within, where house parties of clever men and women delight to test a perfect hospitality from June to October. Having delivered mail and freight, they passed onward through Bun-

galow Bay, by the pine-embowered White Camp and the neighboring Ferris camps on the left, and the lofty, rockbound Kissell camp on the right, into the broad bay that forms the southern end of the upper Saranac ; and in a few moments more glided up to the rustic landing of the Wawbeek, amidst a confusion of enthusiastic exclamations.

“What a charming location !” said Mrs. Holland.

“Mother dear, look at that belt of mountains !” cried Faith, as her eyes swept the horizon, finally resting upon the slopes and curves of Bartlett Hill, Stony Creek Mountain and Seward in the south, with the beach-edged points of the western shore scallopping towards them from their present point of inspection.

“And look to the east,” said Daisy Dean. “The captain says that nearest peak is Boot-Bay Mountain. Isn’t that an odd name ? The mountain across this bay is Ampersand, and away over beyond Boot-Bay are Saddle-Back and White-Face. The Club House is in those pine woods. You can see the top of it.”

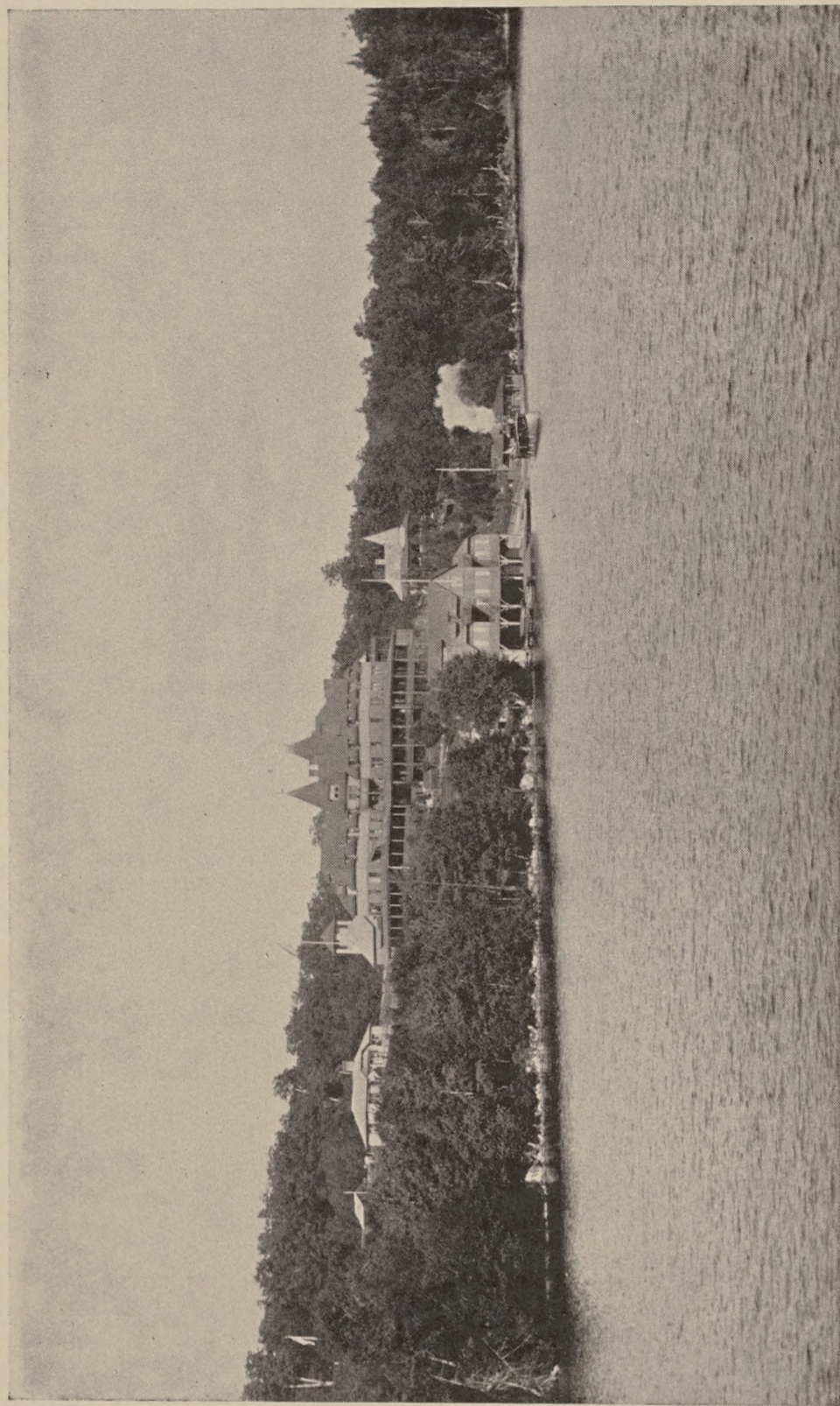
A quick glance passed between Emma Dean and her sister that Jack caught.

“The Club House, by Jove ! Murray is there. I had quite forgotten him.”

If they had not been obliged to go ashore at that moment some interesting remarks might have followed, but the "Saranac" could waste no time waiting for untimely explanations, and the party were soon ascending the curving plank walk to the entrance of the Wawbeek Hotel.

"The circular says this is an easy ascent," puffed Jack, who certainly stood in great need of regular exercise.

"Well, what can you expect when you insist upon being near the lake and yet high above it? It certainly is as easy as it can be made. Now, mother dear, sit right down in this pretty summer-house and get the view and your breath," said Faith, her eyes shining with delight, and her scorn of "Jack's laziness" quickly erased by the wonderful beauty of the living panorama spread before her.



“Restful Waubeek; set apart from all the noise and strife;
Nestled in the very heart of Nature’s tranquil life.”

V.

THE WAWBEEK.

“ A big rock ” in a lovely land ;
Smiling Sam-nin-i-pus just at thy feet ;
The tangled spicy groves on either hand,
And breath of forests, vales and blossoms sweet,
Vying with views of hills and mountains high
That elevate the soul and charm the eye.

“ **H**ILLSIDE COTTAGE,” in its rural setting,
filled the entire party with supreme content.

“ And to think that a week ago I was dreading Adirondack roughing,” exclaimed Mrs. Holland, as she passed through the airy rooms, noted the solidity of furniture, the pretty rugs and dainty decorations, the great open fire-places filled with logs quite ready to light, and all the comforts that modern skill and taste can command.

“ The inside certainly is delightful, but look out of these back windows,” cried Daisy Dean.
“ There is a fine lawn-tennis ground, Jack, and you are doomed to many a defeat on it before the

season is over—and what *dear* woods all about. We must explore them.”

“And get lost,” remarked Jack. “Now, girls, this is not Central Park, and you must not go off alone anywhere. We will engage a guide at once and have proper leadership—but primeval forests look about alike to untutored eyes anywhere outside of familiar land-marks, and it would be no fun to anybody to have you wandering aimlessly about for a day or two when an afternoon tramp was all you bargained for.”

“I have read somewhere,” said Emma, “that the Adirondacks are the safest woods in the world—no tramps, no wild animals, no snakes ; not even poisonous vines and leaves, and the guides are the most honest and the kindest and the best of men,”—pulling the pins out of her hat and throwing it aside as she went to the long mirror that filled the space between the front windows of the parlor, to investigate the state of her wind-tossed locks.

Jack shrugged his shoulders. “If you got lost, my dear girl, you would regret the absence of the first, not believe in that of the second, think nothing about the third and fourth, and simply pray for the appearance of the last, whether good, bad or indifferent. The Adirondacks without a guide

are a good deal worse than Saratoga without horses. Of course you can walk about within sight of the hotel and you can row yourself about on the lake and some of the rivers, but to get the true quality of this life we ought to spend at least every other day, from morning to night, out-of-doors, making exploring expeditions and seeing all we can of what isn't right on the outside."

"You are quite right, Jack," said his mother, "and I think you had better lose no time in engaging guides. Is there anything else we must attend to without delay?"

"I want a boat, and intend rowing myself every day, before breakfast, for muscle," said Faith, whereupon a perfect roar of derision and incredulity burst upon the evening air—for early rising had never been considered Faith Holland's strong point; but she only smiled good-naturedly as she asked the girls and Jack if they did not feel like strolling down to the boat-house and selecting what they needed.

"It is such a glorious moonlight that it is positively stupid to stay indoors."

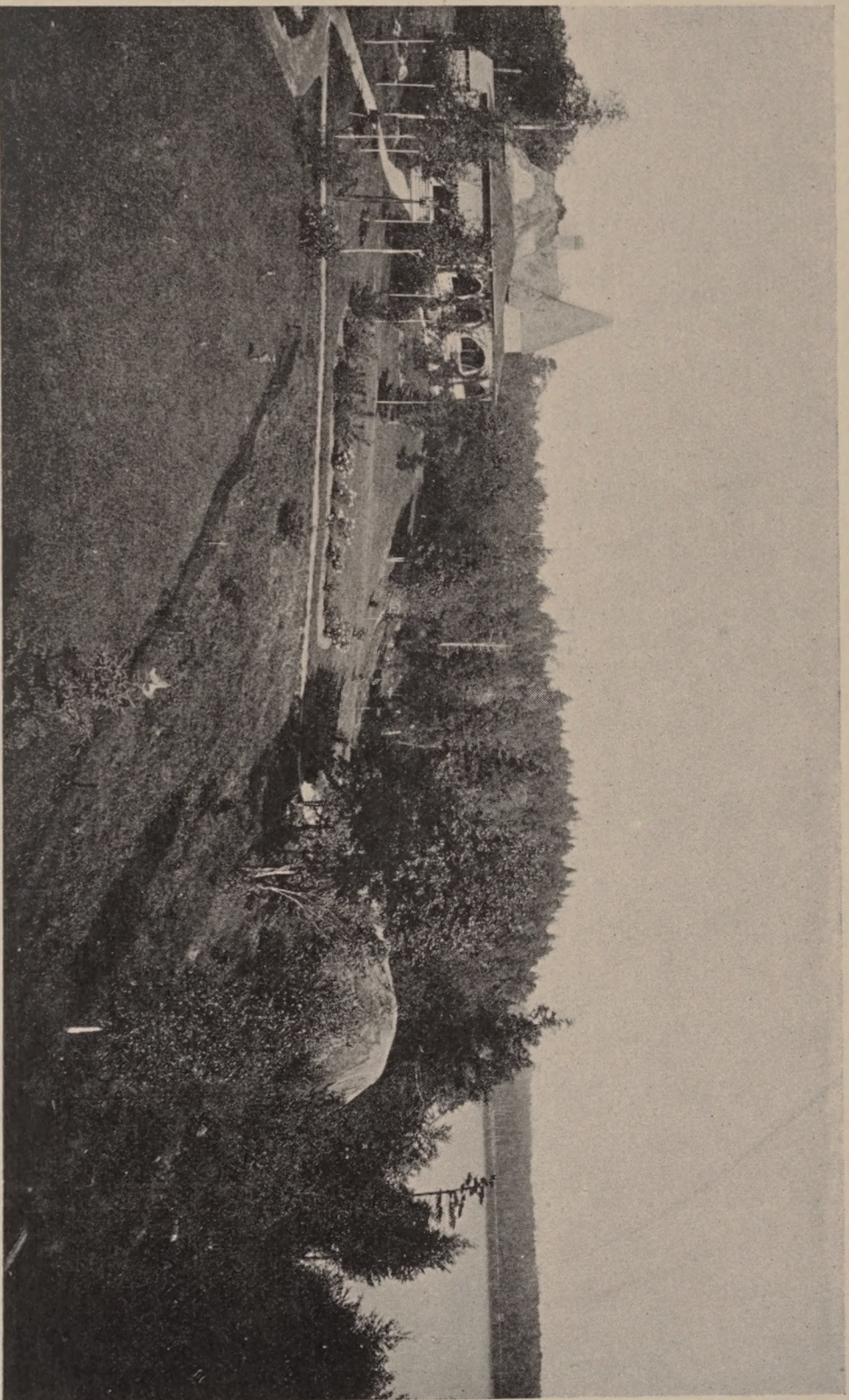
They had already looked over the public rooms of the hotel, had a cordial welcome from the courteous manager, enjoyed the hearty supper in their

pleasant corner of the dining-room, and decided that their waitress was thoroughly satisfactory.

“I am quite delighted with the home-feeling there seems to be in this place,” said Daisy as they stepped out into the summer night and stood a moment on the rustic piazza spellbound by the enchanting picture before them. The moon was in its glory. In the near left-hand foreground “Blossom Bungalow” nestled in its framework of vines, shrubbery and close-shaved lawns—its gables and tiny tower sharply cutting the outer borders of circling forest and dimpling lake. On the left rose the roofs and wing of the Wawbeek, the rooms all alight, the piazzas resounding with footsteps, happy voices and the swish of womanly apparel. The gleaming lake, distant mountains and intervening foot-hills in the foreground completed the scene ; and so calm, restful and uplifting was the influence of the hour upon each of the quartette that words seemed superfluous.

All at once the overture from Oberon floated out from the hotel music-room. True, pure and enticing, the violin sang its charming theme ; rich and vibrant, the 'cello sustained the lovely harmony, as the pianist sensitively and skilfully supplemented the other instruments.

Blossom Bungalow.—“The very spot for Summer dreams and living pictures, in and out.”



“That is no ordinary hotel trio,” said Faith. “They play like artists. I must see what they look like.”

Swiftly, quietly, they passed down the path to the piazza steps of the hotel and in a moment were peering through a window almost within touch of the piano.

“They are all girls,” whispered Emma to Jack, who was crowded out of sight. “Sweet-looking girls, too. They seem so unconscious and earnest. My! but they do play well. Let us sit down and listen for a while. We can go to the boat-house later. It will be fun to watch the people too.”

“Mr. Jack,” called Faith from the next window, “I can make room for you here. Isn’t this cool and comfortable? I’m glad it is so shadowed, for everybody is dressed and we look like tramps. I wish the music would begin again. Oh! *what* a beautiful woman! Girls! girls! come here and look. You can’t see her from where you are. I can see everything and everybody. Isn’t she a *picture*?”

Faith’s enthusiastic summons, following her idle inspection of the group seated in the music-room, brought the entire quartette to the next window, and directly in front of them, in the light of a rose-

shaded lamp, they saw what Faith from that moment always called "The Lady Beautiful."

From the soft clustery hair that crowned her fine head to the edge of her silken skirts she was a poem in silver, only excepting marvellous violet eyes and a complexion that triumphantly defied the usual results of time and outdoor life.

She seemed the centre of a group of friends, and while intently embroidering a piece of elaborate work, talked and smiled, with her eyes seldom raised, until the trio began a favorite selection, when she laid her work down and gave her entire attention to the music.

"I do hope I shall know her," said Faith. "Isn't she lovely! Oh! just suppose she is only here for a day or two. Mr. Jack, *would* you mind trying to find out something about her, for me?"

Jack Dean was too good-natured to refuse such an urgent request, and sauntered off, soon returning with the information obtained from the desk that "The Lady Beautiful" was the occupant of Blossom Bungalow and was to spend the season at Wawbeek.

"Isn't that delightful?" cried Faith. "She is sure to grow fond of Mrs. Dean and mamma, and we shall have the pleasure at least of watching her."

“ You are very modest, Miss Faith,” said Jack as he settled himself in a chair at her side. “ Let me tell you what I have learned about some others in that group. Notice the chestnut-haired beauty next your ‘ Lady B.’ She is a Bostonian ; is here for the season, and makes a sensation whatever she does. Yes, her face is almost perfect, isn’t it ? Next her is her sister-in-law ; fine presence and style ? See the little woman over there by the door fanning herself and nodding her head at the music ? I’m told she has a heart as big as her purse and is always doing generous things. She is Zelig de Luzan’s sister ; sings too, but as a fashionable amateur. Next her is her intimate friend, the wife of her husband’s partner. Do you see that stately woman the other side of the table ?—the one shading her eyes with a fan ;—she is visiting your charmer at Blossom Bungalow, and is one of New York’s philanthropists as well as an enthusiastic supporter of the best music : a lovable face, is it not ?

“ That dark-haired, bright-eyed little woman beyond her is worth looking at too. Perhaps you will hear her play before the evening is over. She is Mrs. Hendricks, a wealthy New Yorker, whose name stands high as an amateur pianist, and the

manager tells me she also composes very good songs. Ah ! Madame R—— is going to sing. What did she say ?”

Faith could not understand the impromptu announcement made, but it was easy to infer its purport, when Mrs. Hendricks, bowing her acknowledgments to the hand-clapping that followed, sat down at the piano and accompanied Mrs. R. in a dainty rendering of “The Rose Loved One.”

The pantomimic attitude of singer and player to each other and to the audience amply proved the song to be of Mrs. Hendricks’ composition. She was modestly delighted, thanking the singers and the people present generally for their appreciation, and everybody looked pleased.

“It is a charming song ; not unlike a Schumann bit,” said Faith. “It must be a wonderful pleasure to be able to compose music. It seems quite beyond the reach of any but the inspired.”

“You love music very honestly,” said Jack. “I suppose you have been to the Bagby recitals some time. No ? Oh ! I forgot you were a Bostonian, and not yet out. You seem so mature and independent always.”

“I am old enough to have travelled and seen much more than I have, but mamma and I never

have been away from home a great deal. Tell me about the Bagby recitals."

"They are awfully swagger things. The nicest people are glad to get a chance to go to them. Mr. Bagby is the author of the musical book that made such a hit—'Miss Traumerei.' He is a pianist, teacher and social favorite, who arranges these Monday morning programs through the New York season, where—if you can get a ticket—you can hear the greatest artists and come near enough to them to get a fair idea of their personality. I've been to them once or twice. See that couple outside the front window. They are Mrs. S——, of Philadelphia, and her husband. They are minus their daughter, which I regret, as I met her in Paris and liked her immensely. She is more fond of people than solitudes and prefers Newport to Wawbeek. Mrs. S. has the reputation of dressing better than any other woman here, but to my mind that is the least of her charms, which is saying a good deal, isn't it?"

"How do you know so much about her?" asked Faith.

"Through Miss S., who adores her."

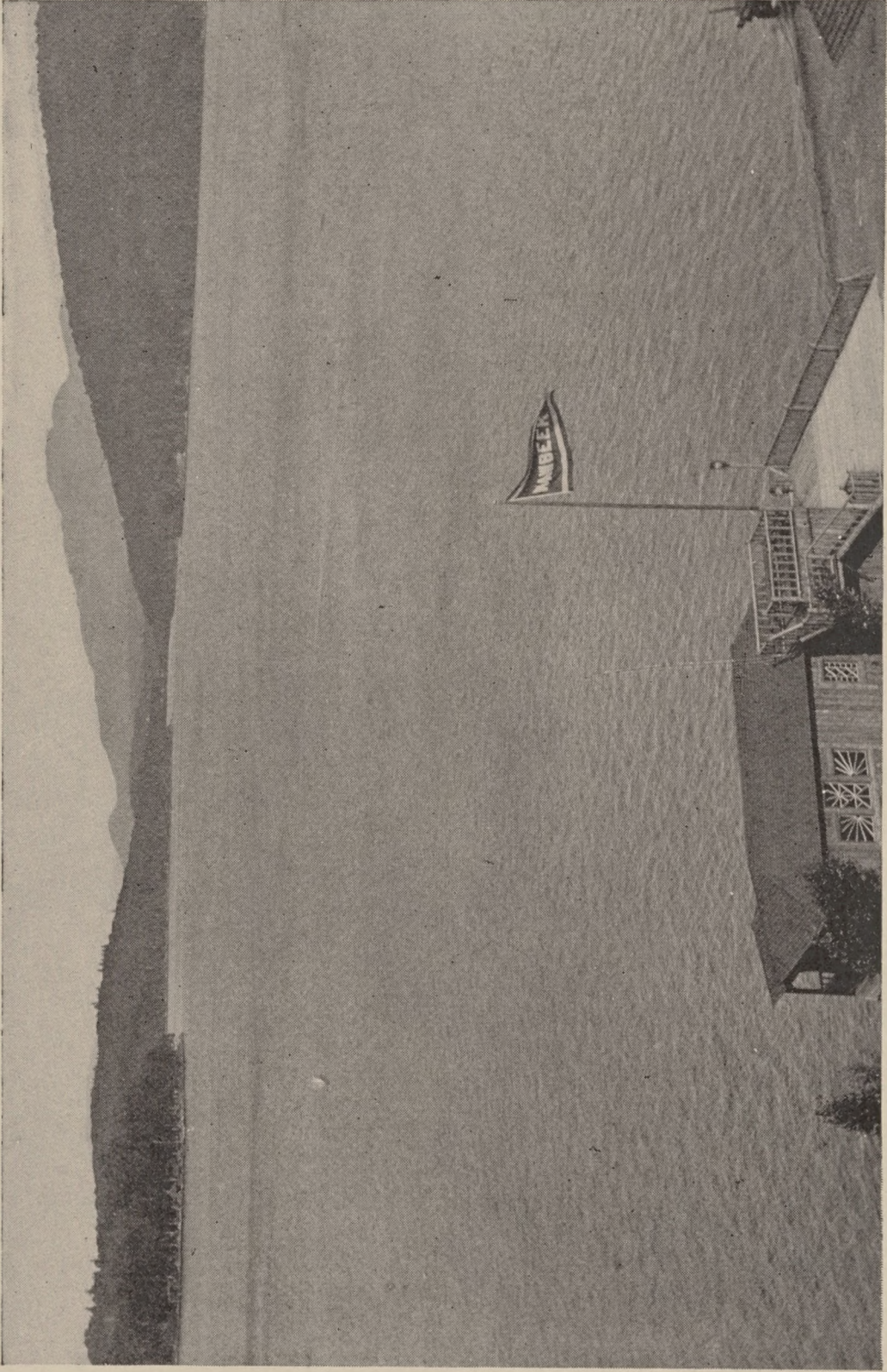
Just then a large blonde man came into the music-room and everybody looked expectant. He

said a few words to the musicians, took a piece of music from the piano, and, throwing back his shoulders and head, awaited the opening notes of "The Best of All." A little subdued clapping ran around the room ; people crowded to the doors, and it was evident the newcomer was popular as a singer, as well as a guest.

As his dramatic barytone vibrated through the crowded rooms every one stopped talking. The musicians seemed in perfect sympathy with him, and the effect was impressive.

"That man ought to be in Grand Opera," said Jack Dean. "He has the presence, voice and temperament—a very rare combination. Why in the world isn't he?"

Daisy had watched the singer narrowly, often letting her eyes wander about the handsome rooms, and then return to his earnest face. She made up her mind that perhaps much the same capacity for making things harmonious is demanded of the modern Boniface that is commonly considered the distinctive attainment of the tone-artist.



Across the Upper Saranac to the Club House.

VI.

HAVING secured guides and boats, the desire was general to use them, and the next day proving fair and not too warm, everybody agreed at the breakfast table to make a morning trip across the lake to the Club House, first skirting the southern shores to, as Faith said, "get our bearings."

"I cannot make this direction seem like *south*," said Mrs. Holland as she took her seat in the stern of the boat, followed by Faith, who established herself in the centre chair, although much disposed to try her own skill at the oars.

"We came in straight north from Utica to Saranac Inn Station, or nearly so. Do you remember the curve of the road, from there to the Inn?" answered Faith.

"No; I thought we turned toward the east. The bend did not seem to appeal to me at all."

"That is not strange," said Faith, comfortingly, as she watched the shore they were now passing.

"What is this first point?—the Wawbeek day-

camp ? A nice place to take a book to ; that is a jolly looking little cluster of cabins—New Yorkers ! And this next one is a beauty ; Seligman, did you say, guide ? Now that just suits me, mother. The views must be superb and the trees are so fine. This is quite a peak we are passing now. Panther Mountain, did you say ? And we can walk to the top of it ? I must wait a while, for you to accompany me, mother dear.”

“ Not long, if this appetite and sleeping capacity keep on,” cheerfully answered Mrs. Holland.

As the procession of boats approached the landing at Rustic Lodge, Emma Dean suddenly started, glanced hastily at Daisy, who was looking up the lake, and then fixed her eyes upon a man who was just pulling his boat on to the shore.

Her face evidenced extremely mixed feelings. Neither unalloyed pleasure nor displeasure could so quickly have changed her entire expression.

Certainly she was not indifferent to the sportsman, but whether he was friend or foe was a question.

Her brother was in the third boat with her mother. As he was rowing he could not see the landing without special effort, so only Emma watched the process of beaching the boat, and saw

him straighten his tall figure and carelessly glance toward the new arrivals.

Quickly leaning forward and touching Daisy, Emma whispered, "There he is—do be careful."

Then the confusion of landing began, and it was another minute or two before Jack perceived the still waiting figure and sprang toward it. "Hullo, Murray—old man! What are you doing here? I'm jolly glad to see you. Mother, here is my chum, Ned Murray: Mrs. Holland, Miss Holland, my friend—Mr. Murray: my sisters, Ned."

Edward Murray went through the introduction with tactful dignity on the whole, but a more puzzled man than he seldom doffed cap.

Too clever to fail in meeting any demand of social conventionality, however he might be taken unawares, he greeted Mrs. Dean with the heartiness naturally expected toward Jack's mother, Mrs. Holland and Faith with respectful courtesy, and the Dean girls with impartial, if perhaps slightly exaggerated, ceremony.

"Are you going across this carry?" he asked generally, as he looked across Mrs. Dean's boat at her daughters, who were apparently lost in contemplation of the old log-cabin ruin on the shore.

Jack answered for the party.

“We are making our first tour of inspection and are open to suggestions. Where will this carry take us? How long is it?”

“Only a mile. The first of the Stony Creek ponds lies at the other end. I fancy you will go over it a good many times before the season has ended in getting to Raquette River and points North and South, so perhaps you would rather skirt the lake first. Have you been to the Club House yet? I am such a tramp through the days that I may have missed you,” said Murray, as he helped the ladies land.

“No, we have not been anywhere yet,” said Mrs. Dean. “I think this place must be one of the first clearings. What a primitive house! Let us walk up to it and get the view. Mr. Murray, if you are not already started upon an expedition of your own, why not join us?”

“Don’t risk any such alluring invitations, my dear madam, unless you desire me to accept them,” answered Murray, with alacrity. “Miss Dean, may I show you some Adirondack drawings founded on facts commonly called fish? Here are the pictures of famous catches”—pointing to the wall of the little hotel on the western side, where several huge lake trout were roughly

sketched, with date, weight and fisherman's name.

"Do you care for fishing, Miss Dean?" he asked, as they stood apart from the rest for a moment, apparently absorbed in inspecting the record before them.

Daisy Dean looked straight before her, thankful for the diversion of interest that attracted the rest of the party to other points and comforted by the knowledge that faithful Emma was just around the corner, near enough to protect her from any too sudden interruption.

"I hate it," she answered with unwarrantable passion.

"Have you always hated it?" questioned Murray, leaning against the house and peering into the flushed face.

She turned her eyes upon him with a look that spoke volumes.

It indicated mortification, anger, perplexity and a kind of courage that savored strongly of desperation.

"Mr. Murray, I have hated it for—years—and shall continue to hate it my whole life. Let us change the subject——"

"No," interrupted Murray, as she turned to leave

him. "By no means. Madge—or whatever name you prefer, if that is not yours—I have never hated fishing and cannot learn to even dislike it. Look at me, please. Why do you doubt my readiness to accept this new position, so long as you are frank and fair? Does your sister distrust me? By Jove! how should I ever have guessed you were Jack's sisters. Why on earth did you not tell me?"

"How should *we* know you were Jack's chum? Why did you not tell us?" demanded Daisy. "When Jack said his friend Murray was at the Club House, Emma and I understood like a flash that the 'Ned Murray' he was always talking about must be—you. It would be simply ridiculous to try and explain matters now, and all you can do is to begin all over—if you think it worth while. You really cannot expect me to tell Jack I have known you for five years and agreed to meet you up here. I do wish you would go away until I can think out our best plan, for——"

"Madge, if you say so I will go to-morrow, but think what we shall lose; all this summer up here in the open—and for what? Simply nothing. You are clever enough to gracefully carry through whatever you begin. Play the roll of a friendly interest in your brother's chum and leave the rest to me."

Daisy glanced at him, half persuaded, half reluctant.

“ I hate acting as much as I do—fishing ; Chris—or whatever may be your name—you must behave perfectly, if you stay, and—what *is* your name, by the way ? ”

“ Edward Christopher Murray, at your service.—‘ Ned ’ to my men friends and ‘ Chris ’ to—you. Why not ? Excuse me, but yours is ? ”

“ Margaret Warrington Dean. Yes, I was half ashamed of that school-girl correspondence and never signed my last name, so when I saw you at the exposition I did not explain. Emma knew, but no one else.—Yes, mamma, we are coming. Now, Mr. Murray, let us hope that all the big fish are not yet caught. I hate fishing, but Jack never will rest until he comes somewhere near this record, if he cannot break it.”

Who could have guessed that this high-bred creature with the fearless eyes, stately carriage and clear, vibrant voice, who turned to her friends so coolly, was the puzzled, uncomfortable girl of ten minutes before !

Emma looked at her with amazement.

Edward Christopher Murray looked at her with admiration.

VII.

FAITH HOLLAND had a positive genius for never appearing to see what it was wise to be blind to, but was far too discerning not to appreciate the fact that her comparatively new friend, Daisy Dean, had wonderfully awakened during the morning's outing, and when they stood on the Saranac Club House piazza, later in the day, she whispered something to her that made the color surge to Daisy's very temples.

"Nonsense," she answered. "He is Jack's friend, you know."

At which remark Faith smiled and enlarged upon the loveliness of the pastoral scene before them and the beauty of the pine growth all about them.

Jack asked her if she liked the location better than that of the Wawbeek.

"Not a bit alike, are they?" she answered. "Here you have just what you would naturally expect in the woods—pines, shady walks, glimpses of mountains, rivers and lakes. It is sweetly

sylvan and restful ; a beautiful spot ; but I love to be up high with things spread out before me, so I prefer the Wawbeek outlook for a steady thing ; but it is like comparing two beautiful paintings, quite unlike each other, and both masterpieces. I think that in some moods these woods must be most beguiling ; for instance—two lovers, like—no, I won't say another word," and merrily laughing at Jack's really puzzled expression, Faith joined the rest of the party and all turned their faces Wawbeek-ward, filled with widely differing thoughts.

Ned Murray saw them across the lake and said, as he left them at the cottage, "I think I'll have my traps brought over, Jack, as you suggest. It is awfully jolly to have people you know close at hand, in the woods."

VIII.

JACK DEAN and Ned Murray were as loyal friends as old Harvard ever graduated, but as strikingly opposite in disposition, character and appearance as two men of about the same age and social environment well could be. While Dean was digesting an idea Murray could act upon it and forget it ; not because Dean was stupid, but his mind like his body was solid, heavy and slow, while Murray was a mercurial creature whose very walk showed his impetuous, erratic nature.

The two friends supplemented each other capitally, and if pleasure-loving Ned was often the gainer in time and freedom to indulge his social proclivities while Jack was plodding for both, it must be confessed that the former saved the latter many a mistake by his keen intuitions, quick wits and watchful devotion, and it is hard to decide which was of most value to the other, in the long run of college life.

Ned had never visited Jack's home, and, so far

as the latter knew, never had met any of his family; so the cordial friendliness that evidently existed between his sisters and his friend was attributed to Ned's "ways," which every one who knew him, both male and female, pronounced "awfully fetching."

To be sure, it did puzzle Jack to see his hitherto conservative sister Margaret succumb so quickly; but perhaps he gave less thought to the matter than he otherwise would have given, if the days had not been altogether too short for his own study of Faith Holland, and, whether he knew it or not, it was a relief to have his sisters so well attended, when he desired the sole society of the object of his constantly-increasing admiration, on the lake or in the enchanting shadows of the encircling forests.

There were several tramps, diverging in various directions from Hillside Cottage, that seemed exceptionally suited to Jack's present study of the old, old story.

Off to the north, wound a rustic road toward the Swenson Camp, from which curved a trail through fascinatingly uneven and at times quite perilously insecure ways, ending in Kissell Camp, with its whispering pines, its alluring, because un-

tenanted, piazzas and rustic seats and its views, south and east.

Then there was the walk up the hill, back of Edgewood Cabin, into the very heart of the woods and down a slope, among great boulders dressed in living green, to the Rustic Lodge road, where one may keep on, past the horse-shoe and quite around the southern end of the lake, or turn with a few steps toward the hotel.

Longer and more fatiguing tramps could be made to Axton, to "Twomblee's," at the west end of Sweeney Carry—about three miles from the Wawbeek ; or to Tupper Lake—a nine-mile tramp through the woods on a good road that lacks even the excitement of roughness and difficulty.

The pretty Bostonian and her charming Chicago sister-in-law were notable walkers, taking their constitutionals regularly for the sake of benefits resulting therefrom in health and vigor ; but Faith Holland and her friends, the Deans, openly confessed to a preference for excursions by water that took them into constantly changing surroundings, gave them opportunities to hear their guides spin yarns, and revealed glimpses of woodland life, camping and open-air adventure. The first all-day trip was to the Lower Saranac, a distance of some

fourteen miles by boat and Bartlett's carry, through Round Lake and a winding, lily-framed stream, called the Inlet, into the rapids and then into the southern end of the lower lake.

The time chosen, a week after the arrival at the Wawbeek, proved to be a typical Adirondack day.

When Faith peeped from her window at seven o'clock, to see what the prospect of going was, she could not suppress an exclamation of delight. The entire eastern horizon was suffused with rose-colored tints, merging into the brilliant blue of a clear July morning.

The mountain slopes seemed bathed in luminous glory, their living greens presenting every shade, from the delicate birch leaves to the darkest pines.

The lake accurately reflected the over-lying blue, broken only by occasionally passing boats, or fishermen at anchor. The air was fragrant with the secret perfumes of early day and resonant with bird-songs.

“Not any wind to make our journey rough, mother dear—and a day of days for being anywhere out of doors. Oh, how sorry I am for the stifled creatures in cities. How altogether good we ought to be, when everything about us makes living such a joy.”

“Faith, is it time to get up?” called Emma, who always was the first of the Deans to start in any undertaking.

“Yes, and hurry too, for we ought to leave the boat-house by eight o’clock, our guide says. It will take four hours to get over to the Ampersand and one hour to get dinner. We want to drive about and see something of the Lower Saranac shores, and we must leave by four o’clock at latest. It will be bright moonlight to-night, fortunately, so we can take as much time as mother has strength for. Are you quite sure, dear, that you ought to undertake such a long trip?”

“Quite sure,” was the prompt reply from Mrs. Holland, as she coiled her golden hair about her shapely head. “Don’t insinuate that I am an invalid, Faith, for really I feel equal to almost anything now. I walked to the Kissell Camp yesterday afternoon while you were over at the Club House; Mrs. Dean went with me, and you never noticed any signs of fatigue or lack of appetite at supper, did you? We stopped at ‘Blossom Bungalow’ by invitation, on the way back, and had a delicious cup of tea and a half-hour’s chat with your delightful ‘Lady B.,’ so dressing for the evening was hardly an effort.”

Lunches had been ordered the night before, and cushions, wraps, umbrellas, field-glasses and guide-books were already stowed away in the boats by the time breakfast was disposed of, so the getting off was easily accomplished by a few minutes past eight, and the party made quite an imposing display in their four boats. Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Dean took the lead with their guide. Next came Faith and Jack Dean, for both agreed that it would do the latter much more good to row than to lose all that greatly needed exercise.

Ned Murray triumphantly settled Daisy Dean in his own boat and gallantly remonstrated against Emma's determination to keep her guide and boat quite to herself. "Mamma may wish to change places with me before we get back, to get a different point of view, and I am going to have a splendid chance to question my guide, with no one to interrupt," she said.

The short carry at "Bartlett's" was an agreeable change, and everybody elected to walk it. The Club House and its surrounding cottages were alive with people coming or going from breakfast or preparing for a day's sport. At a later hour one might think the place uninhabited,

for nobody stays about the house who can get into the woods and on the water. With the universal spirit of joyous energy beaming in every face, it was quite exciting to meet familiar faces—perhaps last seen on Beacon Street or Broadway—and recognize a quite unfamiliar carriage, freedom of manner and ease of clothing.

With it all seemed to come a cordiality and genuine enthusiasm that converted a mere acquaintance into something quite intimate and valued. Round Lake was in its most placid mood, and Ampersand Mountain particularly impressive in the clear atmosphere. Even the rapids presented no disturbing characteristics to the most timid of the party, and it was hard to realize that high wind and opposing currents could at times tax the strongest and most skillful guide to his uttermost.

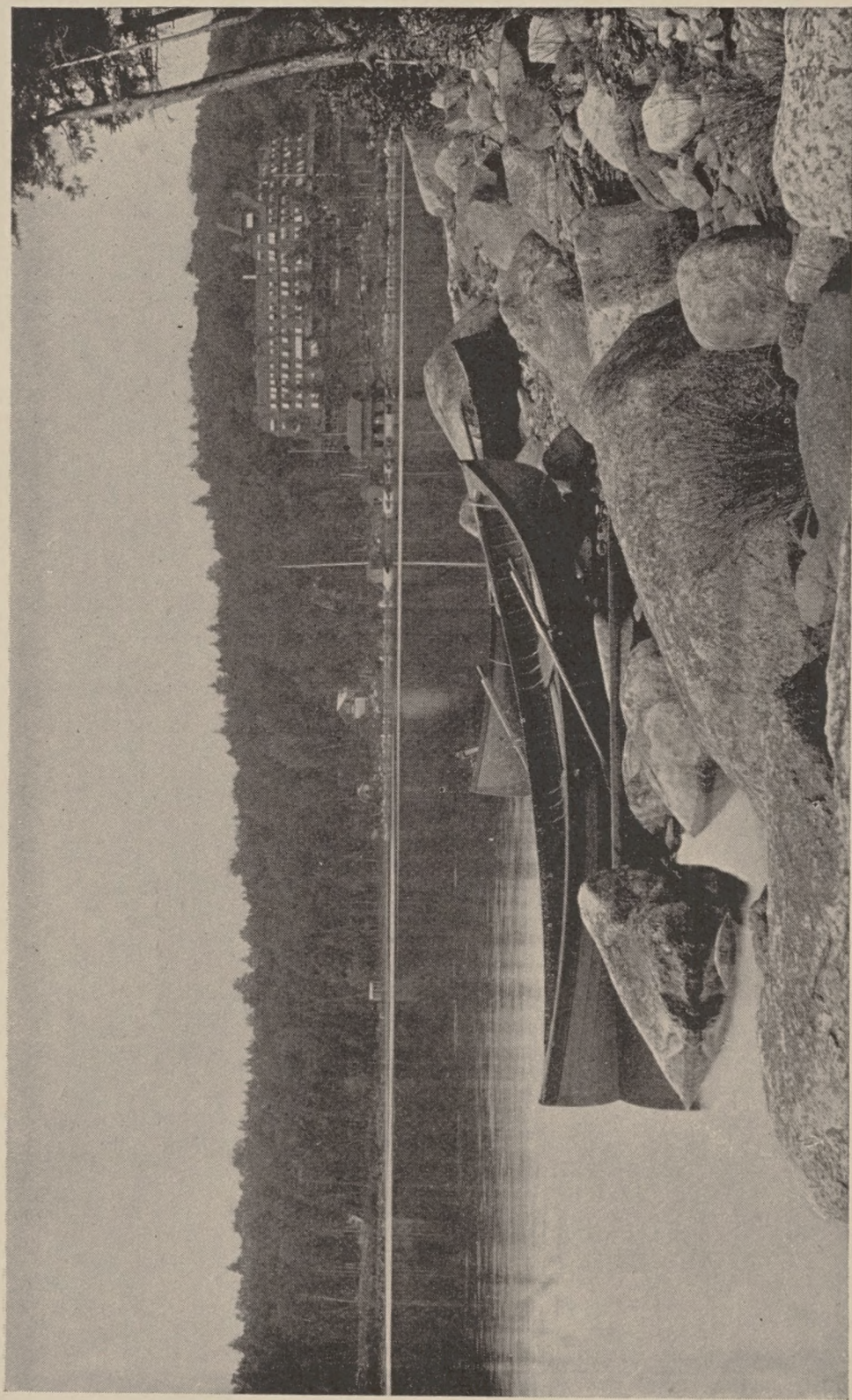
The graceful curves and floral beauties of the Inlet kept Faith in a state of openly-expressed enthusiasm, to which Jack Dean responded as well as his preoccupied thoughts permitted, for when Faith exclaimed, “Oh, how exquisite!” to some view directly back of him, he forgot to remove his admiring eyes from her glowing face as he unreservedly assented, and when she took him to task for “not taking the trouble to look around,” he

simply kept on beaming into her bright face and declared it wasn't necessary.

Ned Murray made the most of his opportunity, too, and only the experienced would ever believe how much can be accomplished even in the brightest of daylight, in an open boat, and under the constant inspection of a brace of mothers, the close propinquity of a brother and sister, to say nothing of an alert intimate friend.

In the eyes of Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Dean there seemed nothing wanting to perfect the enjoyment of every moment. They had neither of them awakened to any serious estimate of the romances that were daily developing. If, occasionally, some suggestion presented itself to either of them, it was so fleeting and trivial that no weight was given it, and the sense of delicacy that all refined womankind feel and cherish concerning possible but undeclared sentiment, precluded any interchange of opinions upon the subject.

If all concerned had not been upon so equal and safe a social level there might have been more caution evidenced by the seniors ; but everything seemed to conspire to blind their comprehension, and so they glided on through the halcyon days



“As they now were borne to the picturesque shores of the Ampersand.”

and still more resistless evenings—as they now were borne to the picturesque shores of the Amper-sand at the head of the Lower Saranac, filled with gladness and content.

As the boats were pulled up onto the boat-house landing Emma hastened to join her mother and the group about her, as she managed between bursts of laughter to repeat to them some of her guide's quaint expressions.

“I never laughed so much in my life—he was too funny for anything. On politics he is something unique. He says he is going to Albany some day ‘to give them everlastin’ fools some pints. Why, they don’t know no more ’bout the woods and what’s going on up here than a cow does ’bout shootin’.’ As we came up to this landing he broke out—‘Anybody ’d think the folks here did nothing but hunt and fish and sech, ter see all the truck ’round,’ pointing to the boats and fishing tackle and deer heads on the boat-house. ‘Law! there *ain’t* any more sports. There ain’t anything but a *mess o’ setters*.’”

“What did he mean by that?” cried Faith, between laughs.

“I suppose he means that the people here are too citified to suit him, and sit around on the

piazzas and in the boats rather than rough it as they used to do, but he is the greatest fun to listen to. Now we must get up to the hotel and make ourselves respectable for dinner. In spite of having eaten heartily at eleven, I am ready for the Ampersand bill of fare ; how do you all feel ?”

There seemed no disposition to evade Emma’s suggestion, and in the meantime the men engaged carriages for an inspection of the country, ordering the guides to bring the boats around to the Algonquin landing, from whence they would start on the homeward journey.

“Isn’t it odd how short a time it takes to settle into new conditions ?” said Mrs. Dean, as they rested for a few moments after a sumptuous dinner on the Ampersand piazza. “We have been at the Wawbeek but a week, and yet the open country, good roads and carriages strike one as unfamiliar and almost novel.”

“It must be because the companionship of primeval forests and untouched nature, the silence of woods and waters, yield so much strength and poise to tired brains and bodies that time ceases to be of any relative consideration,” said Mrs. Holland.

“There are some people that seem to have the

same power of annihilating preliminary processes usually supposed to cover months and years. They take possession at once, and so absorb whatever they choose to become interested in, that no question is raised of conventionalities or methods," said Jack Dean.

Everybody turned as he spoke.

He looked like one thinking aloud, rather than advancing an idea for general consideration. Ned Murray glanced at Faith, to discover how she was affected by it, but she was busy arranging her mother's veil and gave no sign. They all strolled through the pine growth at the north of the hotel and enjoyed the display of tent homes, the groups of pretty children, and the evidences of comfort and luxurious pretense at "camping out" all through the cool hillside.

"If I were a man ——" said Daisy Dean, incontinently.

"Gracious! don't suggest such a thing," whispered Ned.

"If I were a man," persisted the calm voice, "I fancy I should want to come over here often to the games and races; they always have exciting times at the ball and tennis games, and the boat races are splendid."

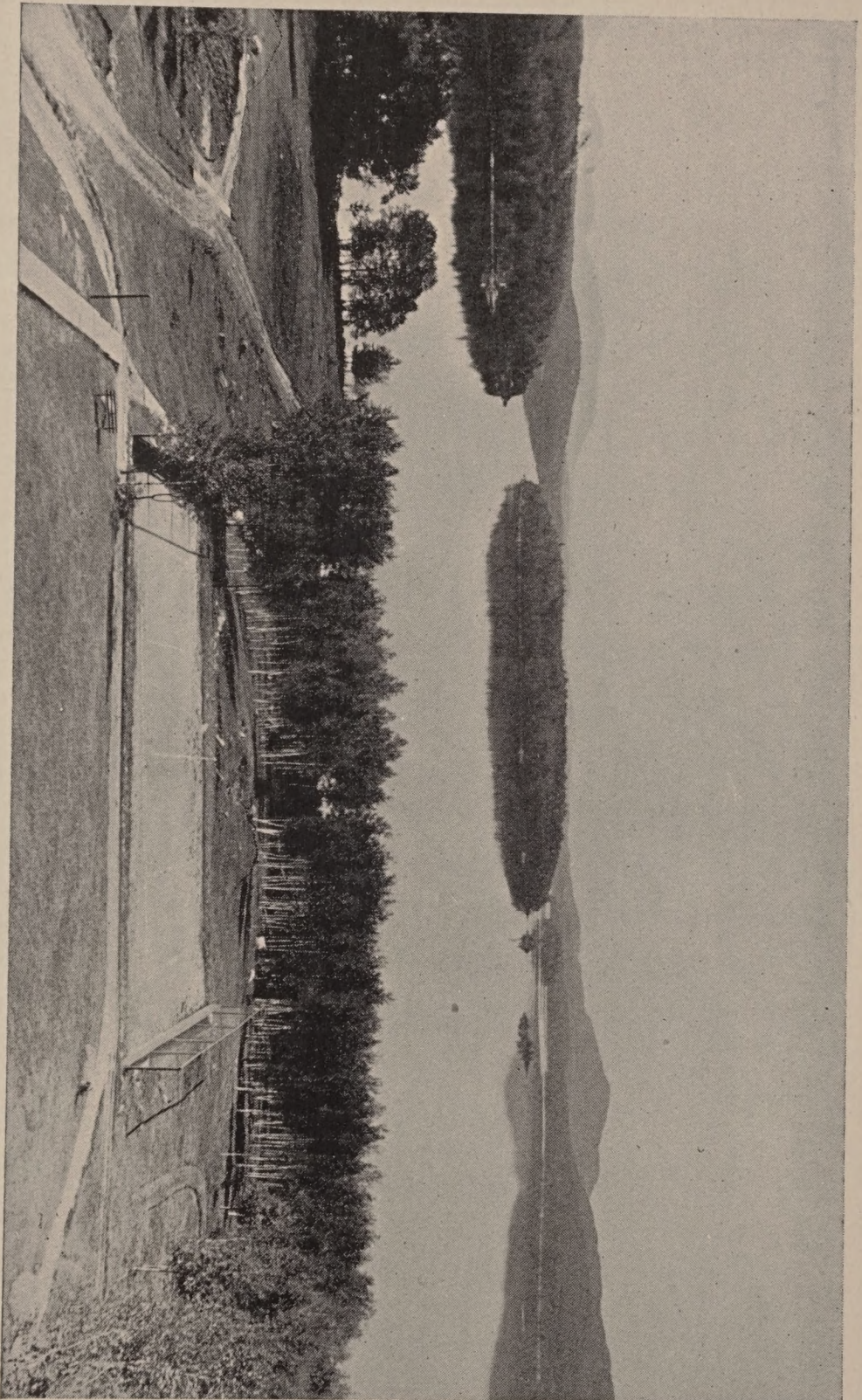
“It is not absolutely necessary to be a man in order to attend any or all of the ‘times’ here,” remarked Jack, as he deftly swung a small boy out of Mrs. Holland’s way. “We can see all the fun whenever we like without much trouble ; just go down to the Inn and take the train or drive over. Come, good people, we must hurry if we are to get to the village and back by four o’clock.”

The roads proved all that could be asked, the carriages—two of them—comfortable, the horses fresh and the drivers easier to keep talking than to stop.

They dashed over the road past the Ampersand gardens, and pleasant winter and summer homes, past the railway station, on to Saranac Village—out to the Sanitarium and back again across hills and vales to the Algonquin, where the carriages were dismissed and a half-hour was still left for enjoying the noble view before them of the islands, shores and waters of the Lower Saranac.

There were some familiar Boston and Cambridge names in the hotel register, and the Deans and Hollands were soon surrounded by friends, while Jack and Ned hobnobbed with some Harvard boys who had just come in with splendid catches.

They all waxed enthusiastic about their popular



The Lower Saranac from the Algonquin.

host, and expressed strong affection for the place, the life, the climate and everything else.

“It makes one think of everybody’s devotion to their own church, physician or byke,” laughed Faith. “We are delighted with Wawbeek, although we enjoy making excursions in all directions, and fully appreciate the variety of attractions we find. *You* swear by this charming place, and the people at the Ampersand think *that* is the one spot on earth to summer in. Isn’t it all delightful?”

That evening when they gathered around their table in the dining-room of the Wawbeek—tired, but not exhausted; enthusiastic, burned as to complexions, but healthfully hungry and at peace with all the world, Mrs. Holland said: “Now that we begin to know something about this wonderful region, and to feel the renewing influences of these undefiled solitudes, in which a handful of people seem but an additional echo or two—how flat, stale and unprofitable it makes crowded noisy highways and resorts seem.”

IX.

THE young man or woman whose best characteristics are not developed by close and happy intimacies amidst unspoiled forests and streams, must be abnormally warped and demoralized.

Happily no such elements formed any part of the Holland Dean circle.

Faith's heart, as well as her mind, reflected only the hopeful, healthful out-reachings of an ardent, enthusiastic and progressive nature.

She took people at their seeming value until good reason for higher or lower estimates arose.

In the hotel life she was immensely popular, because her genuine good-will evidenced itself in a thousand ways and made her a real pleasure to the children, with whom she was a prime favorite; the young men and women, who always considered her a specially desirable acquisition to the drawing-room evenings, where music, games and dancing gave them an opportunity to meet; and particularly to the elder men and women always grouped

about the piazzas and parlors, who watched for her return from various excursions, quite sure that she would share her curiosities with and relate her experiences to them.

The "Lady B.," of her first evening's discovery, had made "Blossom Bungalow" a delightful feature of the summering.

When the sun shone too ardently for vigorous tramps or long explorations, it was safe to look for Faith's mother and Mrs. Dean on the Bungalow piazzas, the young people coming and going, between lawn-tennis bouts, strolls into the adjacent woods or chance engagements elsewhere.

The hostess set the example of industry—her embroidery seeming almost a part of herself—while some one read aloud or animated conversation sped the hours.

One evening, when the entire party had been playing cards, something was said about Paul Smith's.

"How do you get there?" asked Daisy Dean—perhaps as much to break the spell of Ned's intent gaze as for information.

Jack seemed to know all about it. "The proper way to go is by boats, but it is a longer pull than any you ladies have undertaken, and

there are several carries to walk or drive over. The girls could do it well enough, but mother would not care for so much exertion. Of course I don't dare insinuate any lack of strength in Mrs. Holland's direction, but even her energy might find sufficient vent in the stage drive from Saranac Inn."

"I think staging would be a pleasant variety," said Mrs. Dean. "Are the roads good?"

"More than good for the Adirondacks, but you know it is very dusty. We have had no rain to speak of for a month, and watering-carts are not yet in general use in the woods," warned Jack.

"Who cares for dust? We shall be too far above it, too, to be much annoyed," said Emma, who dearly loved moving about.

After due discussion the men excused themselves to make arrangements for the next day, as Ned Murray's stay was nearly at an end, and it seemed best to make sure of good weather while it lasted.

The rest of the group went out on to the piazza and sat in the moonlight for a while, before saying good-night. It was eleven o'clock and the hotel lights were fast disappearing. Long days

out of doors make sleep welcome at early hours, and insomnia finds small foothold among energetic fishermen and huntsmen.

“ We have been here a whole month,” said Faith, as she admiringly contemplated her beloved “ Lady B.,” for once lounging in her chair, with her hands at rest, the moonlight adding a peculiar charm to her exquisite silvery hair, her patrician pose of head and the general air of gracious strength which characterized her.

“ How I love this place ! Yesterday we went up to Fish Creek pond and through some of the others, beyond. How anybody can complain of there not being places to go to anywhere on these lakes I do not see. We shall not have time to explore half as much as I would like to.

“ It makes me tired to hear some of the cranks at the hotel talk about ‘ its being too dreadfully quiet.’ Of course it’s quiet—if one insists upon staying in a chair on the piazza all day, when everybody is enjoying themselves in the woods and on the lake. Such people should stay within reach of a brass band and fire-works. They can’t appreciate anything else !

“ I wish you all could have seen mother when we got to the lily pads. She nearly fell overboard

trying to get the blossoms, and went into perfect ecstasies over the leaves. They made the most exquisitely tinted floating carpet—through which we had to push our way.

“We saw some huge roots above water that the guide said the bears come out for when they are hungry, and as we were rowing back, very quietly, I distinctly saw the bushes and low branches of trees on the shore moved, as by something passing through them. We would hear steps, too, and everybody held their breath lest the something be frightened away before we could see it, but the steps turned inland and soon were lost to our hearing.”

“That was a deer coming down to drink, for sure,” said Flagg. “He found us out sooner than we did him, and it ain’t no use hanging ’round here any longer. He’s a mile away by this time.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Holland, “it was quite exciting even to hear a deer step. I hope we shall see one before we go out.”

“Wait until September and you probably will,” said Lady B. “Only a little above us, in front of one of the camps, a fine buck took to the lake from the point just below their boat-house and created a great excitement. The family—at least

the female part of it—were aroused by the cry, ‘A deer!’ ‘A deer!’ and every one of them rushed from the lunch-table out on to the landing, waving whatever they could lay hands on, wildly gesticulating and shouting at the top of their voices, in their endeavor to head him toward the shore where their guide could get a shot at him. But their efforts were vain, for the guide could not be found until the deer had landed on a higher point and made off into the woods. The trying part of it they discovered later. The deer was started by their own guide and dog, and after doubling on the party, was bagged by some hunters over by Tupper Lake.”

“It seems a most stupid order of sport to me—this setting dogs on a trail and then quietly awaiting and profiting by the combined efforts of two antagonistic beasts. I think if I were a man I should care little for any glory so easily won,” said Daisy.

“City sportsmen seldom consider ways of getting possession of game. I have been told on good authority of men coming into the woods with experienced guides, who brought out the fruits of a combined effort on the part of the latter as their own, swearing that they aimed the fatal shot, but

not explaining that the guides first wounded the deer and then *held* it while the excited amateur blazed away until successful. Yes, it is a strange passion that possesses men and also some women. The people in the hotels complain often of the disturbances occasioned by hunting parties starting out at two and three o'clock in the morning. You can always be sure there are women in these parties, and they will endure the chill of our September nights, fatigue, and great discomfort, on the mere chance of seeing some one of their party bring down a deer. There are, however, some modern Dianas on this very lake. Our neighbors, over at Pine Point, both mother and daughters, are keen and skillful sportswomen, and it is understood that the largest lake trout ever landed in this vicinity was the victim of the accomplished Philadelphian's piscatorial art."

"My dears, do you forget that we start to-morrow by eight o'clock?" suggestively asked Mrs. Dean—whereupon everybody said good-night, and Blossom Bungalow and Hillside Cottage soon closed their doors upon their respective occupants, dreams of enticing and varied sort descending gently upon the sleepers.

The pines sang tender serenades all night to the

obligato of the lapping lake, and but one wakeful heart resisted their soothing influences.

There is a sweet unrest that will not be appeased by nature's loveliest tributes of fragrance and beauty ;—in her dainty chamber there lay a maiden, through long hours of that summer night, star-gazing and soul-questioning.

X.

A NAPHTHA launch may not be a strictly artistic element in an Adirondack scene, but this is an age of haste, and poetry must yield to economy of time and strength.

The following morning proved as bright as could be desired, and the Wawbeek launch whistled "time up" just as our friends appeared upon the wharf, the party being augmented by an extra man, discovered the previous night by Jack Dean, and introduced to the ladies as "my classmate, Mr. Theodore Stanley."

"I'm very much afraid you are not at all prepared for the dust," said the new-comer, as he took the seat next Emma Dean.

"We've not had a drop of rain for weeks about New York, and when I landed at Saranac Station last night I was the worst looking tramp you can imagine from the journey's grime and dust. You see this lake absorbs your attention so entirely up here, that the lack of water elsewhere does not matter so much."

“ You know we are country people now, Mr. Stanley,” gaily answered Emma, with a suggestive glance at her new acquaintance’s conspicuously spotless sporting costume, “ and rather enjoy looking disreputable. I assure you, it is quite the thing to look shabby up here, through the day. You can be as fine as you please at dinner, but if I were you I would jump overboard once or twice, just to give yourself an Adirondack finish.”

“ For Heaven’s sake, Emma, don’t say such rash things to Stanley. The first thing you know he will be taking your advice literally, and then we should be in a pretty muddle,” said Jack, as he glanced uneasily at his friend, remembering college days, when “ Ted ” Stanley ranked every man in the University for skill in, on, or under the Charles River, and never hesitated at any daring experiment.

Stanley shrugged his broad shoulders as he quietly assured the party that he was at their disposal, and apologized for “ the vulgarly and offensively fresh condition ” of his clothes. “ The only explanation I can offer,” he added, “ is having been so tied to business that this is really the first glimpse I have ever had of anything so delightfully free and refreshing as Adirondack life promises to be.”

Everybody liked him from that moment, and Emma Dean confessed to her sister afterward that she was ashamed of herself for so misjudging him.

“Fine feathers may disguise fine birds sometimes!—It is stupid to judge by feathers, good or bad, isn’t it?” remarked her mother, as she let her impulsive daughter re-arrange her wrap.

They all enjoyed passing the pretty islands with their various camps evidencing the early morning bustle of preparation for another day’s enjoyment.

Across at Birch Island the buildings looked cool in the shadow of their wood background, and an air of spaciousness and comfort distinguished the entire camp. “It is the summer home of one of the youngest and first scientists of the country, whose ideas of rest are synonymous with enthusiastic and serious work in his camp laboratory, as much as with the outdoor pleasure surrounding him,” announced Jack.

Further along, toward the north, are the buildings, tents, bridges and winding-walks of the Strackosch Camp, from the highest point of which the American flag vigorously furled and unfurled its patriotic emblems.

“This composite of islands and mainland is an example of what can be done in a rustic way with-

out sacrificing comfort or the rural charm of the place," said Mrs. Holland. "I enjoyed my call there the other day immensely. The hostess is a woman of remarkable intelligence, and entertained so delightfully that two hours passed before I thought of leaving. The husband is a genuine lover of 'the open' and a perfect guide-book for all this region. Speaking of guide-books—I was looking through Stoddard's 'The Adirondacks Illustrated,' and saw that you can get another book of his, 'The Adirondack Wilderness,' by sending to Glens Falls, N. Y. I wish you would remember to write for it, Faith. I would like to have it here while we are in the midst of this life.

"Yes, dear. What are we coming to? It looks like a village. I can count one, two, three, four, five, six, seven buildings and a summer-house, and deer-pad and lawn-tennis ground and launch-house. Why, it's a landing large enough for a regular town."

"Pine Point. There is the name on the flag, and this must be the wonderful camp where a man I know visits every season," said Stanley. "He is most enthusiastic about the place, the family, the hospitality, and the whole experience."

"It is one of the finest camps in the woods,"

said Jack. "If we had not been so busy among ourselves over the other side, we might have known personally more about it, for the hostess and my mother were old acquaintances at school. Only yesterday we found ourselves unfortunate enough to have missed calls from a member of the household."

The Pine Point house parties seldom number less than fifteen or twenty guests, and they enjoy themselves in all kinds of delightful ways."

Forty-five minutes from the start the launch brought them safely to the Inn landing, and in another half hour "Eli," the famous whip, was whirling them off through the woods, well settled for an eighteen mile tally-hodrive across country to the famous great hostlery of Paul Smith's.

Faith begged to sit on the front seat with Eli—secretly planning to get the reins into her own hands occasionally. The mother agreed, if Jack took the outside seat next her and would be responsible for her safety, which office he promptly, not to say joyfully, accepted.

The two chaperons were installed behind them, as the most comfortable places on the coach, leaving the other seats respectively to the Dean girls and their escorts. Ned Murray unselfishly elected

the back one for Daisy and himself “because we are more used to it.”

“To what?” demanded Emma, with well assumed innocence—“back seats?”

Stanley glanced at her keenly and his eyes sparkled, but he contented himself with saying (for her ear alone) “unkind.”

The journey was full of interest.

To be sure the horses travelled in dense clouds of dust and the earth was parched and dry, but the air was sweet and pure; the wind took the dust away from them and there was great variety in the scenery.

There did not seem to be much general conversation. Every one but Stanley felt too entirely at home with the rest to make small talk necessary. All ceremony between the Deans and the Hollands had, by tacit consent, been dropped, even to the gracious permission on the part of Faith that Jack might dispense with her title in their daily intercourse. At this time there seemed to be a niche for everyone, Stanley submitting with evident relish to a running fire of joking in Emma’s most mischievous mood.

“Who is Mr. Stanley?” asked Mrs. Holland of Mrs. Dean.

“I don’t exactly know, unless he is one of the Virginia Stanleys. There were several of them in Harvard. He must be thoroughly desirable or Jack never would have introduced him. I like his looks. Don’t you?”

“Yes, very much. I knew a Mrs. Stanley once. She was at a summer hotel where my husband and I were, and we were together a good deal. She was a Virginian. Do you see resemblances readily? I am curiously sensitive to them. Somewhere I have seen a face very like his; and, do you know, once in a while I find myself wondering if I have not seen Jack before. There are times when I feel as if I had known and now recognize his gestures and tricks of manner. He does not look very much like you, do you think?”

Mrs. Dean shook her head. “Not a bit.” She seemed little disposed to talk for a moment, letting her thoughts follow her eyes as they rested upon her son’s brown hair and handsome profile.

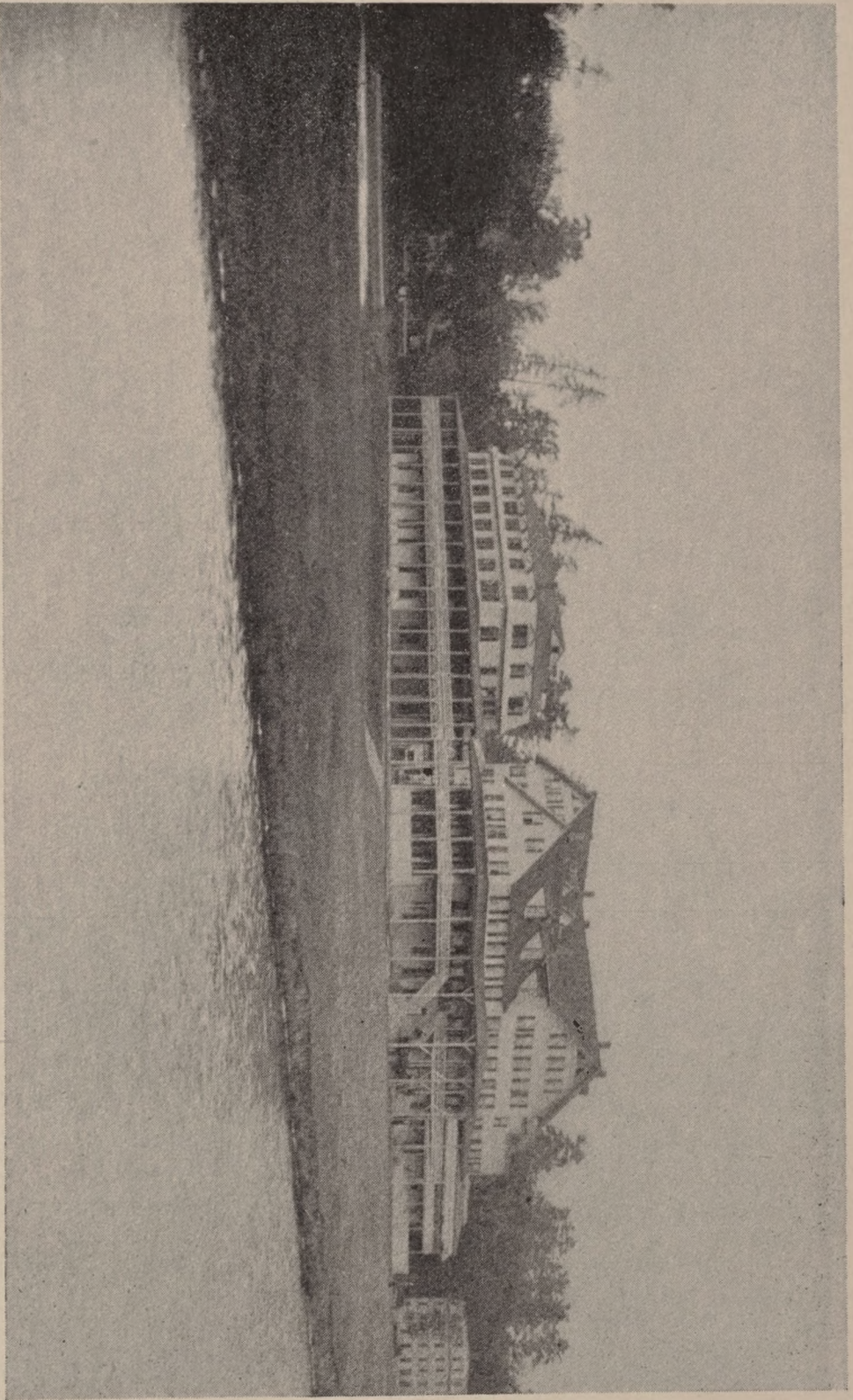
“He is a dear fellow. I do not know how we could get along without him this summer,” said Mrs. Holland—hoping, she hardly knew why, to draw out something more from his mother, who seldom talked about herself or her children.

Mrs. Dean smiled. "I'm so glad we can have him. It is the first whole summer we have been together since he began school." And there the conversation fell into other channels and the party grew more generally alive to the situation.

Up and down and around the hills the horses carried the great coach. Sometimes they passed through dusky woods and had to dodge the lower branches of the trees. Again they ambled along good country roads and by comfortable summer homes, until another long ascent, or more exciting descent, brought glimpses of distant mountains and intervening valleys, and Eli had to answer a torrent of questions.

"Here is the Adirondack and St. Lawrence Railroad," said Jack, as they came in sight of the station, clattered over the track, and swung into the fine road leading to the great and famous hostelry. In another half-hour they had made a quite imposing round-up at the hotel entrance, and taken possession of the waiting table reserved for them in the dining-room, with a satisfaction known only to hungry travellers whose appetites stand no chance of inflicting any other penalty than an increased delight in appeasing them.

After satisfactorily attending to that agreeable



Paul Smith's.—“A famous name, a famous house.”

duty, they wandered about the beautiful grounds, went out on the lake and got an idea of the camps near by, and listened to stories of the early days when the elder Smith made the first clearing and built the original house.

“What do you think of it all, Faith?” asked Jack as they walked back to the hotel.

“It is another surprise. Not a bit like what I expected. Much larger, much more modern, and these grounds are as cultivated as Cambridge parks. Just the place for October, when the smaller hotels are closed. It is sheltered from the wind by all these trees, and there is room enough for indoor sport.”

“My, dear child!—When *do* you consider home desirable?” asked Mrs. Holland, who began to fear that Faith’s wandering propensities were becoming abnormal.

“Always, to possess and to be able to go to when you like, mother, but homes, like relatives, become burdens, ‘when they are imposed upon one at undesirable times.’”

“What original ideas of some things you have!” remarked Stanley. “Do you often feel like being relieved of your nearest relative, Miss Holland?”

“My mother!” Faith cried with a look that made everybody laugh, it was so tragic.

“Don’t mind Ted. He is an incurable tease,” said Jack. “And, by the way, if we are to get home to-night it is quite time we started. It’s after four o’clock now.”

Rolling over good highways by daylight is one thing, but the combination of dust, dusk and stretches of dimly defined woodland roads, where the bordering line of thick foliage may not be a foot away from a precipitous decline, on either, and sometimes on both sides, is quite another thing.

The first two hours were full of jollity and good cheer. Everybody expatiated upon the features of the country spread before and around them, interchanged amusing personalities, badinage and jokes, but as the woods shut out the sunlight and the twilight came on, the party enthusiasm changed to a quieter and less general tone. Faith, being nearer the whip than any one else, first discovered his difficulty in seeing the way, because of the dense dust which the wind now carried with them, at times completely hiding the wheelers from sight.

Stanley suggested that they all spend a week there before the season closed.

“I must confess to something approaching a

craze upon the golf question, and the St. Regis Golf Club is far and away, to my mind, the greatest attraction here. The Links are fine, and the club boasts twenty as good Americans as live," he said.

"You can tear about in the sun all you like, my boy, if I may have my canoe," cried Jack. "The regattas are immense on the lake, and the boat-races too."

"I think we have seen at least a dozen cottages near the hotel," said Mrs. Dean, "and Jack tells me that around Spitfire Lake and Upper Saint Regis there must be sixty or more camps that are worth going a good way to see."

"Many of them are works of art and really palatial," said Jack. "I was up here last year, for a week, with a lot of fellows, and we had a bang-up time, I tell you. Oh, you know there is no place in the United States where you can see more famous people, within twenty-four hours, than at Paul Smith's. It was the first hotel in the woods—at least that I ever heard of—and people who come here year after year swear by it and by each other; but anybody can enjoy themselves without half trying, if they love the woods and waters."

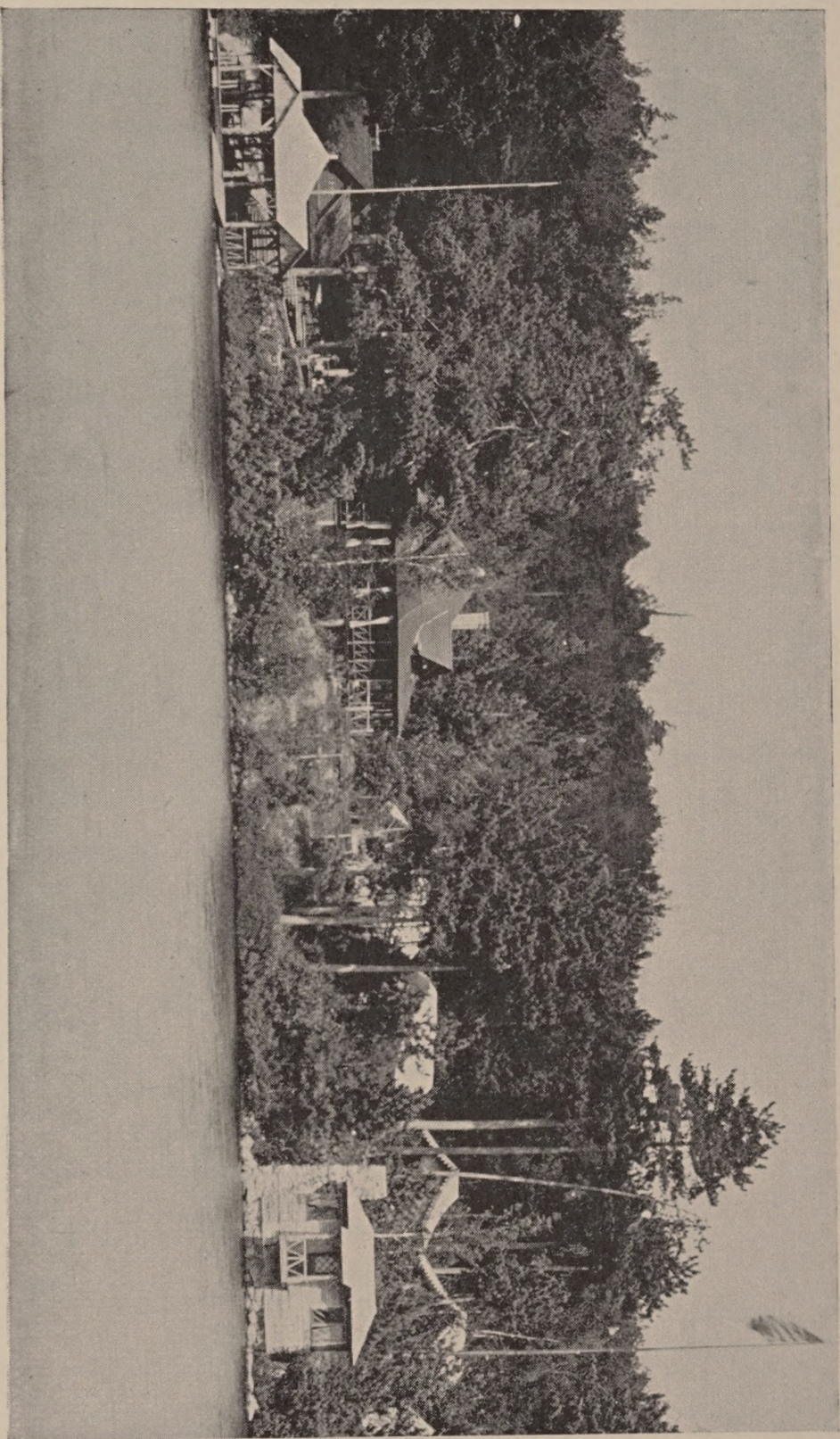
"I guess we'll have some more light," said

“Eli,” stopping the Tally-ho on a convenient level. “We had oughter started earlier. It’ll be real dark before we get to the Inn, and ” (in a voice audible only to Faith and Jack) “there’s some places in the woods where the road is steep and narrer enough to keep me wide awake any time of day,”—and then he said no more, but left everybody to draw their own conclusions as the lamp-lights suddenly turned the dust clouds into the nearest reproduction of a London fog that any of them were likely to see in this country.

Ned Murray and Daisy had confined their attentions exclusively to such subjects as concerned themselves alone, and for some time had made no audible remarks.

Mr. Stanley and Emma kept up an animated discussion upon the relative merits of sea-coast and mountain pleasures, into which the chaperons entered with equal interest. Mrs. Holland in particular asked many questions about Stanley’s experiences and opinions, in such an unusually persistent way that Faith, overhearing her, wondered at her sudden interest in the new acquaintance.

“Move over to the left, quick,” rang out Eli’s strong voice, as the coach slipped a little ominously to the right.



Camp life at Paul Smith's.

“All right. I couldn’t see the road, for a minute—go-’long there, Susan—What-cher-’bout?”

No one but Faith and Jack realized how near they had been to a perilous edge, and they only whispered to each other their admiration of Eli’s caution and diplomacy.

“He knows every inch of the road or I should be getting down and looking ahead for myself. These horses would stop at his word, if they were in front of an engine—but I tell you this is the greatest test of his skill that could be made. This dust is like a wall. I shall not be sorry to see the Inn—except—”—well, Jack Dean’s exceptions seemed of great interest to Faith Holland, but were not intended for other ears.

At nine o’clock, the faithful Eli drew his tired horses up before the side entrance of Saranac Inn, and scored for himself a notable and honorable triumph over adverse circumstances—though be it said to his honor most of the party never would have known the dangers they had escaped if Faith had not told of them.

At ten o’clock they were safely gathered around a late supper at the Wawbeek, the lake trip having acted curiously unlike upon appetites, for while the elders boasted of famous capacity for all the

good things prepared, and proved themselves all they represented, the younger folks seemed more anxious to get through and over to the cottage.

Ned Murray brought all the letters to them there, and every one was soon deep in their contents.

When Emma looked up from her collection of missives and glanced around the group, she was startled at Murray's face and attitude.

He was standing near the centre of the room with an open letter held before him with both hands, his eyes however being set upon Daisy and his whole expression denoting a great mental excitement.

Emma restrained the question that rose to her lips, but forgot everything but her interest in Murray's remarkable attitude until Jack broke the silence by some remark about a matter that concerned the former and necessitated an answer.

Instead of replying, Murray crushed the letter between his strong hands and beckoning to Jack to follow him, left the room, without a word.

XI.

“**W**HAT is the matter, Daisy?” asked Emma, as the latter sank upon the nearest chair and buried her face in her hands.

It was not yet seven o’clock, the morning after the Paul Smith excursion, and both girls had been awakened by a tap on their door, persistent but low. Daisy upon answering it had found Jack waiting to give her a note.

“Don’t make any noise. It is too early to waken the household—I will wait for your answer and take it to him.”

The note was from Ned Murray.

“I am called home. Must leave on the early boat. Will you not come down to the hotel parlor for a half-hour? Jack says he will bring you, if you will come.

“CHRIS.”

Daisy Dean made no answer to her sister’s inquiry until another tap at the door reminded her that she could not ignore Jack.

She pushed back her hair, looked at the little French clock on the dressing-table, glanced out of the window an instant as if to picture the waiting day's scenes, and then swiftly stepped to the door.

“ I'll be dressed in ten minutes. Tell him, Jack dear, that I will go down to the rustic bench on the shore below Blossom Bungalow.”

She spoke confidently, as if no fear as to her brother's lack of co-operation entered her mind, and evidently there was no ground for any ; Jack's comfortable “ all right ” gave her the tonic she needed, and when Emma, somewhat impatiently, repeated her question she said, quite calmly :

“ Ned is called home and has to take the first boat. I am going to say good-bye to him. Will you come too ? ”

If she had not been so entirely occupied in the hasty arrangement of her pretty hair she would have seen Emma's gesture of dramatic negation, but she only heard and recognized the suggestiveness of her voice and words.

“ Excuse *me*. Just fancy Ned's disappointment ! —but tell him I was really *too* sleepy to speak to anyone, and say *bon voyage* for me. He'll probably get back before I'm fairly awake ; ” wherewith

Miss Emma carefully arranged her pillows and in another moment, to all appearances, was in dream-land.

* * * * *

The Adirondack mornings in August—what compares with them. A rose-tinted haze half veiled and half revealed Whiteface and the intermediate mountains on the eastern horizon. The lake gleamed in the foreground like burnished silver outlining the opposite shores and islands with curves and lines unapproachable in art. The blue of the zenith found its perfect match in the Saranac waters, and here and there guide boats spun long threads of silver from point to point or an early fisherman silhouetted himself against the watery radiance, in silent watchfulness. The fragrance of sun and dew-steeped forests deluged the air with an intoxication for both soul and body, and Daisy Dean in her dainty rose-colored lawn and drooping mull hat with roses nestling under the fluffy edges, against her hair, seemed the incarnation of the hour, as she passed down the slope, turned by Blossom Bungalow and disappeared among the trees below.

Ned Murray saw her coming from his watch-ground, the rustic seat, where they had spent

many happy hours during the summer, and in a moment was by her side.

Neither of them spoke, but stood with close-clasped hands, looking into each other's faces, flushing and paling with the contending emotion of a love that had not yet clearly defined its relations.

“How dear of you to come, Daisy. I was so afraid you could not, or—*would* not manage it. You are such a timid creature at times and again—so fearless!”

“But why are you going so suddenly, Ned? Why could you not have told me all day yesterday?” asked Daisy, gently withdrawing her hands and making a movement toward the bench.

“I did not know until I read my letter last night, and then—there were complications to be considered and matters to arrange.” Here Ned Murray suddenly straightened himself and withdrew a little from the young girl's side. “Daisy, I am going on what may be a long and painful errand. It concerns others than myself and possibly may involve them and me in scandal and grievous trouble;” here he looked at her with unflinching dignity, seeming to gain height and seriousness with every word. “I am in honor bound

to tell you this much now, and to leave to you the decision of our present and our future plans. You know I love you with all my heart and soul. I believe that you love me, dear, but I will have no half-way contract, no conditional vows. This new phase of things makes it all the more necessary that we should thoroughly understand each other. Daisy, do you love me enough to marry me within a month and go to a distant land with me—sharing whatever may be my lot?”

He was now by her side. A great love vibrated through his voice, his glance, his insistent compelling clasp of her hand.

She trembled, dropped her eyes and seemed overcome with emotion.

“I wish—oh, how I *do* wish I felt free to answer you as I know you expect me to, Ned,” she half-whispered.

“And why should you not?” he demanded with sudden passion. “You are of age; we have known each other for years—why, what is the matter, Daisy?”

“*That* is all the matter,” she cried, withdrawing from his caress and throwing herself back against the trunk of the tree behind her. “I can never forget that school-girl *beginning*, and some time—

if I should marry you—I feel sure it will come between us. I was so bold and forward.”

Murray gave a great sigh of relief, sat down beside her, and drawing her to him, said: “Daisy, *my* flower, is that all that stands between us? Are you still worrying about that bit of fun. Oh, my little girl, don’t waste precious time and sweet opportunity for such a trifle. If you can honestly say you love me now and will marry me whenever it becomes best—even though it be next week—I will go away this morning the happiest, proudest man on earth, even though I go to suffering. Daisy, *will* you promise? Will you trust me?”

“Hello, there, Murray, you must come along—time’s up,” shouted faithful Jack from the great rock beyond and above the grove.

In another half-hour Ned Murray was waving his farewells to the familiar group on the landing, and mentally exulting over the splendid self-command of his betrothed, whose appearance indicated nothing more to the general intelligence than natural well-bred regret at parting from a pleasant companion, but whose lovely eyes told him quite another story.

XII.

FAITH HOLLAND was making discoveries every day of her life, and they were by no means confined to Adirondack lakes and mountains.

Never having been schooled in either the necessity or the practice of deception, she now often found herself puzzled at her own words and acts, and at this stage of things was beginning to inwardly vituperate herself as a person of no decision of character, if not, indeed, of no fine sense of truthfulness.

On the very morning of Ned Murray's departure, after watching the launch out of sight with the rest, she deliberately turned her back upon the enticing loveliness of nature, a deaf ear to Jack's invitation to go fishing, and an equally pronounced blindness to the look of surprised regret upon his face, and shut herself up in her room ostensibly to write letters for the entire morning.

When the doors were securely locked and she felt sure of a little time for self-communion, she

opened her desk, made ready her writing materials, and then, resting her elbows upon the surface in front of her, and clasping her hands under her chin, began in her old fashion to converse with herself.

“ Well, Miss——kindly explain yourself. Are you or are you not a heartless, selfish, deceitful creature ? What has come over you lately ? Why do you say one thing when you mean quite another ? Why do you take such fiendish pleasure in disappointing—people ? ” Here a bright flush spread over cheek and forehead, and seeing it Faith smiled scornfully at the reflected picture. “ I don’t wonder you blush ! cruel, *mean* thing. And as if it were not enough to hurt the feelings of—people—you must neglect your precious little mother while you gad all over this place with—people. And—yes ! ” (pointing her finger at the now quite dramatic face) “ you even interfere with the plans of the girls—just because you suddenly make up your mind to pester—people. How that handsome Stanley read you, yesterday. You can’t cheat *him* with your little tricks. And you could not cheat—people—if—they were not so good, and gentle, and devoted. . . . ” and the head sank upon the desk, little broken sobs vibrat-

ing through the silence of the room, while outside voices on the croquet and lawn-tennis ground, and an occasional ringing laugh or call from people on the lake, seemed to make no impression upon the usually gladsome Faith. In thoughts deep and absorbing the hours passed. Not a line of writing appeared upon the dainty stationery. At times a restlessness seemed to impel her, and a quick, impetuous walk up and down the room would be followed by a return to the first position at the desk and another monologue. When a step she recognized as her mother's approached the cottage, and a knock at her door soon followed, she thought to herself—"Now for more deceit," and snatching up a pen began to scratch away furiously.

"Is it you, dearest?"—the voice would have misled the elect. "Give me another half-hour and I will let you in, but if you come now these letters never will get written; (that's true, any way!)"

"Hurry them, for we are all going to Raquette River right after dinner, and down to Tromblee's. Jack wishes you to go in his boat, and the guides will row the rest of us, unless Mr. Stanley succeeds in getting a boat and rowing Emma."

“Very well. I will be ready in just thirty minutes, mother dear.”

And then that young woman proceeded to stuff an envelope with newspaper cuttings, menus, programs and small photographs until it looked like a young book ready for the printer. In two minutes more she had written as many lines on her smallest note-paper, signed it “Your loving cousin Faith,” and duly directed it to a distant relative with whom her mother insisted upon her corresponding, but who, fortunately, enjoyed one form of remembrance as much as another, not being in the least sentimental.

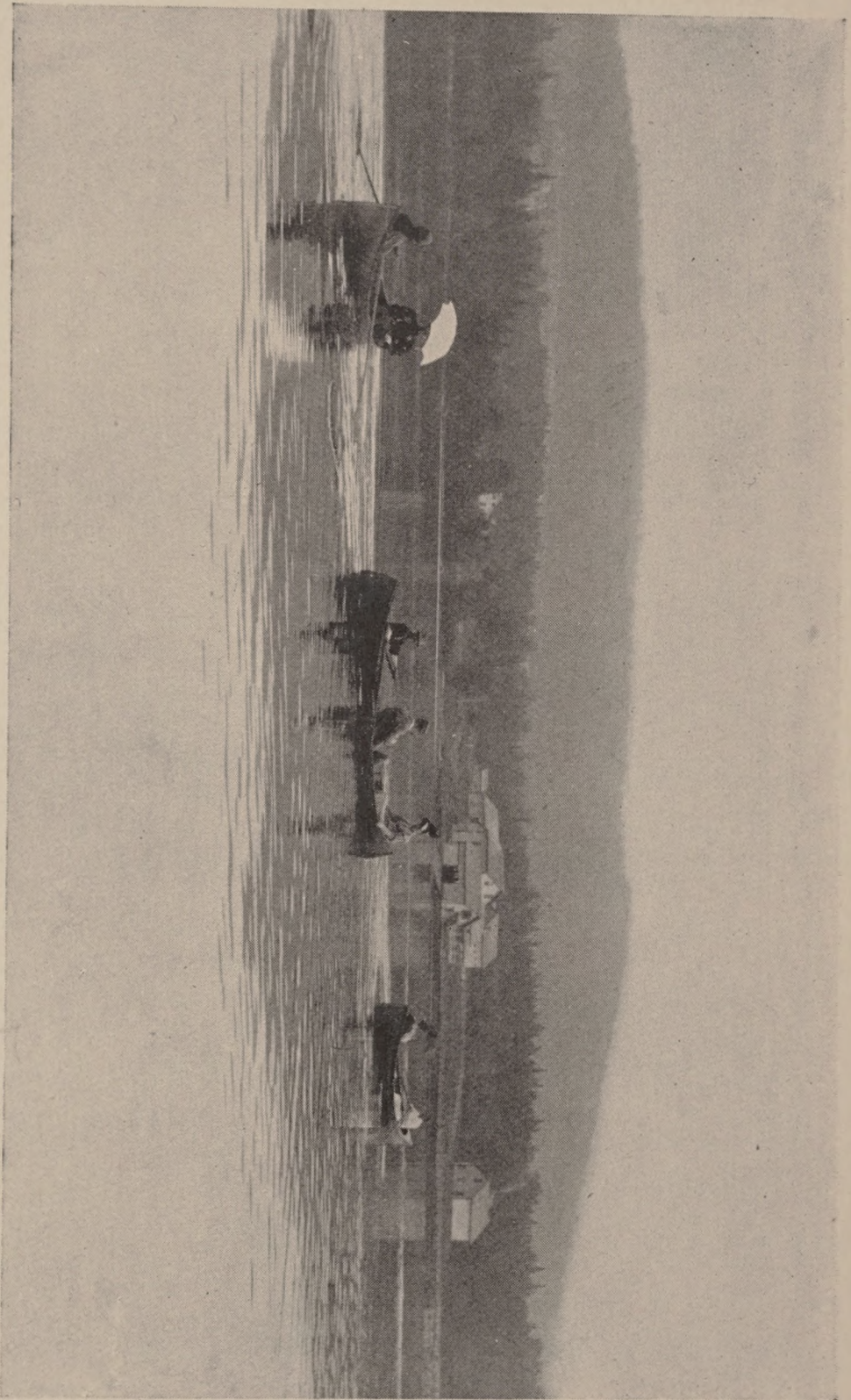
“There ! for once, my ancient kinswoman, you prove yourself useful. Now I can have the rest of the time to think.”

* * * * *

Off they rowed in a jolly, chatty company, by the same shores, now grown familiar—by the pretty Island Chapel, where Sunday after Sunday they had gone, with campers and hotel guests—southward, to the Indian Carry, where Ned Murray had met them on that morning weeks before.

No Ned greeted them this time, and perhaps no one but Daisy Dean remembered.

They took the wagon across to the Hiawatha



A day's Excursion.

House, as walking was too slow for what was planned, and they were warned that the creek was low and not as easy rowing as usual.

Jack had secured Faith for his companion and Stanley had also been successful in getting both boat and desired burden.

Mrs. Holland seemed somewhat absent-minded, but strong, bright and wonderfully changed from the woman of six weeks before.

“If your mother lives a hundred years she never can be anything but charming,” said Jack, as he followed Faith’s eyes, and noticed her mother’s distinguished profile as it was silhouetted against the bluest of blue skies.

They turned north when they reached the main river and found drifting with the strong current as enjoyable to rowers as to the rest of the party.

Great holes dug in the sides of the river banks aroused Daisy’s curiosity. “What are they, Flagg? Snake-holes?”

“Water-rats. They will soon begin to build their winter-nests, and then they will cover up all the water-ways to them and keep snug all through the cold weather.”

“*Hugh!* what horrid things they are. It makes me shiver to think of them,” said timid Daisy.

“Wa-al, now I tell yer, them water-rats air the cleanest animals I know of,” said Flagg, as he moved his head from side to side and faultlessly guided his little craft around the eddies and stones and hidden dangers of the agitated river.

“I’ve seen um take a piece of apple out of the water an’ wash it an’ rub it an’ clean it as good as a cook could, before they would put it to their mouth. An’ ef it didn’t suit um they would jest throw it away—yes, sir.”

Sex made no difference to Flagg when he was conversing with his patrons.

“I suppose the flies and mosquitoes are something terrible along here in the spring,” said Daisy.

“I *guess!*” was the laconic answer. “Nobody could stan’ um unless they burned pennyroyal or some of those things you find on trees. I guess yer call it fungus.”

“Will that keep off insects?”

“You bet. And it smells good, too. I’ll bring you some to the cottage, and you dry a piece and then light one end of it, and put it in a window by you, or close to your seat, on the piazza and there won’t a biting critter come anywhere nigh you.”

“Where are Jack and Faith,” asked Mrs. Holland as they landed at Tromblee’s.

“I guess they ain’t fur off,” said her guide. “I seen um half an hour ago. It’s likely they stopped somewhere to get some curiosities. Miss Holland is a regular case for um.”

The sun was still above the horizon, but would drop behind the forest before they could reach the Wawbeek, a good three miles away ; so Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Dean concluded to take the wagon they found waiting for them, leaving the two girls and Stanley to come with Faith and Jack.

“Another wagon will be here in a few minutes,” said the host of the little country Inn—and so they sat on some old logs and chatted and waited.

“There they come,” said Stanley as the sound of oars cut the still air.

“No,” said Daisy ; “it is a man alone. Perhaps he has seen them.”

No stranger passes unwelcomed in the woods, and in another instant the new arrival was accosted.

“Hullo ! have you seen two people in a boat since you came past the creek ?”

“No. I hain’t seen nobody. Anybody see my dog ?”

“You’ll find him somewhere Long Lake way, I guess,” said a guide who was waiting for some boats. “I saw him up there yesterday.”

The stranger wasted no words upon the subject, but pushed off and pursued his way toward Raquette Lake.

“I think Jack must have gone south instead of north when we came out of the creek,” said Emma. “In that case they will not come this way at all, but will go back by Rustic Lodge. It is no use waiting for them, and here comes our wagon. No doubt they will get to the Wawbeek before we do now.”

“But if they have just dallied along the river, not realizing the time, and should get here after we have gone, what would they do?” asked Daisy, perhaps realizing the flight of time under some circumstances more fully than her sister could.

“That can hardly be,” said Stanley, “for in that case the man who just stopped here would have passed them. I have no doubt Jack thought of something interesting that he wanted to show Miss Holland above the creek—not calculating wisely upon rowing against the current, and finding it too late to get down here has gone home the other way. Won’t they be hungry?”

They all had such omnipresent appetites in these surroundings, that an hour's tardiness at meals was generally carefully guarded against by well-filled lunch baskets which on this occasion had not been thought necessary.



“What do you say to landing on this point where all the logs have drifted in, etc.”—See page 116.

XIII.

“**D**O you mind if I take you down the river a little way first? We can catch up with the others easily enough. There are some pretty bits of shore and you will get an idea of how men hunt,” said Jack, as he brought up the rear of the procession and leisurely pulled through the creek.

“I’d like it,” said Faith. “How low the water is!”

“Yes, and I am going to get out here and pull the boat over this shallow. If we do not have rain soon this creek will run dry.”

Either because of Jack’s own weight or that of his boat, he seemed to find more difficulty in getting through shallows than the guides and Stanley had found, and when they reached Raquette River, none of the party were in sight.

“We’ll go our way first, and theirs second,” said Jack, as he turned southward.

Faith seemed wonderfully acquiescent, only saying, “What a large river! I had no idea the Raquette was so imposing.”

“Perhaps contrast has something to do with it. Almost any stream of water would impress one after dragging over the rocks and mud of the creek. I’m sorry you could not have had a pleasanter impression of that bit of rowing which is generally very picturesque because of its incessant twisting and curving. It’s mighty lucky we brought a man for each passenger—three in a boat would be one too many with a vengeance.”

Faith was looking straight ahead, over Jack’s right shoulder, and still gave no sign of especial interest in what he said. She made a sufficiently distracting picture to satisfy his eye and temporarily his purpose, even if she would not look at him, for our slow but sure friend had planned even better than he knew for a few hours *tête-à-tête* with the now controlling influence of his life. He reasoned admirably when giving her time that as yet could safely be spared, before putting his somewhat doubtful case to the crucial test. For weeks had he worked out this new and intoxicating problem as, day by day, Cupid’s toils pressed him closer and closer. For weeks had he made her every mood and feeling his engrossing study, deducting therefrom two impressions that gave about as much of doubt as hope ; of anxiety as of joy.

He found her to be always puzzling and always enchanting.

Whether these qualities were in the least due to outside conditions among which could be included his own appreciation and devotion, he had not been able to decide. One day she was like a sister in her unaffected pleasant and even intimate companionship, but just as likely as not, an hour would change her to a mood that was no whit less fascinating, but, to all practical purposes, seemed to him as far removed from his personal participation as though he were looking at her through an opera-glass.

Then she had such unique ways of keeping him busy. It was—"Do coax mother out on the lake, Jack ; she feels so safe with you, and you are so much more entertaining than a guide."

Jack Dean doted on Faith's pretty mother, and it was no burden to act as her escort anywhere, in and of itself, but when some other fellow carried off Faith, no matter where, it made a curious difference in his zest for anybody's society.

"She is such an honest child-like nature ; not the least bit of a flirt—never would dream of using or abusing any man," he would think, as he gallantly and loyally followed her behests, but in-

wardly restless until he had her again within sight and reach.

Mrs. Holland had taken pains to acquaint herself with her daughter's constant companion, in as far as so curiously inexperienced and practically unsophisticated a woman might, for with all her pen-wisdom Miriam Holland had as little knowledge of the world as was possible to a gentlewoman hitherto protected from it by circumstance and taste.

She felt wonderfully drawn to him, recognizing his large nature—tender as a woman's, strong, deep and loyal. At times she felt a curious sense of familiarity with certain gestures, expressions and attitudes, as though, instead of a comparatively new friend, he belonged to her whole life. Sometimes she felt a real sympathy for him in view of the, to her, quite probable uselessness of his evidently increasing interest in Faith, for never had one word been exchanged between her daughter and herself upon the subject. As united as they always had been in life and thought, there were subtle individual reserves inseparable from their sensitive high-mindedness that now, for the first time, made discussion or even allusion to it impossible to both.

Her unvarying friendliness had been a source of great comfort to Jack at times when his own courage waned, and more than once had he narrowly escaped confiding to her his hopes and fears, but it savored too much of weakness and a little of disloyalty to Faith, to either approach her through a second party or in any way precipitate upon her what might be a painful position. So honest Jack waited until this late August day, and with calm deliberation carried Faith south instead of north, perfectly well aware that he was thus gaining for himself a few hours in which his prior right to her society was not likely to be questioned by anybody.

“Tell me about deer-hunting, Jack,” she said, ignoring his remarks about the creek. “Is this river-bank a favorite drinking place for deer?”

“All the water-ways are their resorts when thirsty or when hunted. See that path running off through the grass and into the woods? It is as hard as iron and is called a runway. Probably hundreds of deer have helped to beat it into its present condition, and during the hounding season you often see hunters waiting along these shores, gun in hand and boat drawn into the bushes, on the chance of getting a shot at a buck that the dogs have started perhaps three miles away.

There's one now under that tree." Jack hailed the sportsman—"Seen anything to-day?"

"Not yet."

"He's waiting for sunset. No hounds are allowed until the 10th of September. A curious thing about deer is that they will run to water, swim across to any point of land, and almost always double back to the starting-point, sooner or later, though it may be in a tremendous circle. And a dog will start on a scent, and although dozens of deer cross it, he will stick to the original one until he loses it in a river or lake. So you see water is to a deer what a boat is to a drowning man."

"Is it true that hunters are too rapidly killing off the Adirondack game and that there is danger of its becoming extinct?"

"I hardly think so. The guide on Birch Island told me that deer-tracks in the woods beyond the island, at any time through the winter after snow falls, are as thick as stalks in a cornfield. Now, Faith, what do you say to landing on this point where all the logs have drifted in and packed themselves together, and I will catch a few fish, while you can watch the process and give me good advice."

Faith laughed. “*Advice!* Now, Jack, I won’t be made fun of just because I never have any luck. Is this a particularly quiet place for river trout?”

“Fine! The water back of this point is very deep, and they love such dark, cool places.”

“But you have no bait—and we ought not to be gone so long from the party,” demurred Faith, as Jack stood before her with outstretched hands waiting to help her onto the shore.

“We’ve plenty of time, and there is more bait in my box than I shall need. Please come.”

He had such strong, steady, reliable ways of doing everything—this great fellow—and was so at home in the woods, that Faith had grown to giving up all thought about anything but enjoying herself whenever she was off with him on their short excursions. So she let him pull her onto her feet and help her to a fine combination of tree-trunk and terraced logs, where she declared that all she needed was a box of candy and one or two of the boat cushions to perfect her content.

In a moment the cushions were adjusted and the box in her hands.

“JACK! how thoughtful! and where now are

you going to catch the fish? I don't see any deep water."

"Won't you let me rest a moment and have a bit of something sweet?"

Faith looked away as she answered quickly: "Dear me! do excuse me; help yourself"—pushing the box toward him as he sat down near her.

They were quite silent for a while.

The summer breeze sighed through the trees over their heads, and the strong current from Long Lake brought down the river bits of drift-wood that made Jack think of serious things. Such trivial happenings sometimes serve as texts, and Jack was fast growing serious.

"Faith, do you know I often seem to myself a good deal like a great piece of purposeless substance carried here and there by circumstance;—at least I used to." He had thrown off his cap and run his hand through his heavy bronze hair until it lay in loose waves all over his head. He made Faith think of a picture she had seen once. She had forgotten its title and its creator, but the general pose of the central figure and the expression of the face were vividly recalled, as she looked at her companion, and she wondered what it was in both that so appealed to her.

“What is wrong, Jack?” she asked, smitten with real, if dangerous, interest. “Why do you look like that?”

He never had seen such an unreserve in Faith’s eyes before. It seemed as if a veil had fallen and for the first time they knew each other.

It gave him a liberty of speech and action that would have been impossible five minutes before.

“What is the matter with me?” he cried as he pulled himself up to her level and bent over her—holding her eyes in a wide-open, intent, spellbound gaze that his own seemed to meet and answer.

“I am hungry and thirsty, Faith. I am homeless and desolate and hopeless, *forever*, unless you love me.”

She still looked at him, breathing quickly, and flushing vividly, while his whole face paled with intense feeling, and his lips trembled with the supreme effort he made to control himself. His voice sounded like the refrain of an organ, deep, sonorous, tender, and she knew from the bottom of her soul that the words he had spoken were truth. Still she made no answer—unless the involuntary placing of both her hands on his shoulders and an equally involuntary gesture of gentle resistance

against his nearer approach conveyed any meaning to him.

He, finding the suspense intolerable, forced a change of attitude by tearing his gaze from her face and moving a step below her.

“Jack ! Jack !—do you love me as much as that ?”

She had never realized before what love could mean. Never again would she doubt its mighty power, and never again would she wittingly wound the man who so loved her and *whom she loved*.

Once awakened to this fact, Faith Holland was not the girl to waste another moment in doubts and fears.

Radiant, joyful, and proud as a young queen just enthroned, she threw her arms about her waiting lover's neck, as he turned at her words, and for that supreme moment the sun seemed to stand still, the heavens to open to those two, and a new history was begun.

* * * * *

“Seven o'clock ! by all that is earthly,” ejaculated Jack, some hours later, as Faith insisted upon his looking at his watch, “and not a lady dressed for the ball !”

“In other words,” translated Faith, trying to

look severe and succeeding only in adding a new charm to the thousands, more or less, that Jack had been enlarging upon—"not either of us anywhere near where we should be. Really Jack, if love has such an influence upon good common sense as we seem to be proving—stop, sir! Let me go."

"Love is a madness," quoth Jack Dean, evidently relishing Faith's helplessness, as she made a quick movement toward the boat and missing it, fell across the strong outstretched arm.

"What is it?" asked Jack, as he saw her suddenly whiten and heard her mock command change to a stifled cry.

"Oh—please—please, dear, put me down somewhere. I—oh!—" and therewith Miss Faith Holland fainted quite away.

XIV.

MRS. HOLLAND was getting very anxious. It was nearly eight o'clock. The two Dean girls and Mr. Stanley had long since arrived from Tromblee's, having neither seen nor heard anything of Faith or Jack, and no one of the arrivals from the south end of the lake had any news to tell of them.

They were all sitting together in the summer-house discussing the situation and hesitating between letting Stanley take a guide and go over the morning trail, or the entire party going.

The night was oppressively warm anywhere out of the delicious breeze that seldom fails the Adirondack region at night, and the moon would be in full evidence after nine o'clock.

There seemed no reason for any one to stay behind that wished to go, and a certain unspoken dread made unity of purpose and action desirable.

"I think if you will order the guides and boats to be ready we can meet you at the boat-house in

a few minutes," said Mrs. Holland ; and, as Stanley disappeared, she added to her women-friends : "Something serious has happened. Of that I am certain. Neither Faith nor Jack would have been so far behind us simply through carelessness. Faith never causes me anxiety if she can avoid it, and there is some good and sufficient reason that is detaining them. Whatever it is I should go to her, and I hope you all will feel like going with me."

"Of course we do," said Mrs. Dean, "though I never feel the least troubled about Jack or any one he has the care of,"—with a suspicion of resentment in her voice,—"but it is too warm to stay on land, and even if we meet them very soon after starting, it will be pleasant to get onto the lake again. I do not feel in the least tired—do you?"

"Oh, no ; but I am impatient to find our run-aways," answered Mrs. Holland, with thinly-disguised uneasiness.

They soon had wraps and cushions adjusted, and three boats glided out from the landing, heading for Rustic Lodge.

They passed many couples and some more heavily-laden boats drifted with the current, the young people in them singing college songs that

the shores echoed back to them with musical accuracy.

A few friends recognized them and hailed them gaily. It always was Stanley that answered, however, the women merely waving a hand or nodding. Each one watched for, thought of, and wondered about the absent, whatever words their lips might utter, and once Stanley asked a man, rowing alone, if he had been out all day—having seen him last at the other end of Indian Carry, where they had last seen Jack—and he answered, “Yes, I went the other way and got as far as Raquette Falls, but it was the hardest pull I ever made.”

Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Dean involuntarily looked at each other, as though hoping one would ask the question both so eagerly desired answered, but some second thought seemed to influence them alike, and Mrs. Dean looked away while Faith's mother remained silent.

At Rustic Lodge they all landed, telling the guides they would go up to the house for a while.

As they slowly walked up the hill Mrs. Holland, speaking so all could hear, but addressing Stanley, said: “I have been thinking it all over very carefully and have decided in my own mind that

some accident has happened. Neither Faith nor Jack would willingly keep us all in suspense in this way. Of course it is not wise to make any stir about them, for the newspaper correspondents would magnify the matter into something tragic at once, and we should all appear in the papers under startling head-lines. If you, Mr. Stanley, are willing to go with a guide and me, and follow the Raquette south until you find some clue to them, I shall be very grateful. Perhaps Mrs. Dean would like to go, too."

"No ; I think I had better stay here with the girls. We do not happen to know any one, so we can be quiet and no questions will be asked. If you do not get back by ten o'clock, we will return to the Wawbeek and keep house until you do. Perhaps you will conclude to stay over night at the Hiawatha and keep Faith with you rather than row any further, for I am sure you will meet them somewhere along the way, none the worse for a little loitering. You know that man said it was hard rowing against the current, and with the heat and all, no wonder they have taken it slowly.

So it was decided that the Deans would return at their leisure, and Mrs. Holland pursued her quest—a carriage taking her to the Hiawatha

House that stood on the bank of Stoney Creek pond, where Stanley stopped to ask about accommodations in case Mrs. H. decided to remain there over night.

“You had better sit right there, until I find out about it,” he said, as he jumped out of the vehicle. It is nine o’clock now, and the moon will soon make it as light as day. I can row you to Raquette Falls, if necessary. There is a small hotel there. But we may not care to go that far.”

Mrs. Holland was not in the least an hysterical woman, under any circumstances, and she had great confidence in the good sense and the physical strength of her daughter; so, while she was determined to join her wherever she might be, she felt no greater anxiety than naturally accompanied such an unusual state of things, fearing unpleasantness rather than danger.

Sitting in the carriage and looking toward the creek, she spied a boat approaching that seemed to contain but one man, who was pulling with deliberation and evident care. He was a large man, so large that not until he swung the boat around a little to get it alongside the landing did Mrs. Holland catch a glimpse of another figure sitting so low in the boat as to have been quite hidden, and

it did not take a moment more to spring from the carriage and run down the hillside.

“ Jack—Faith—why, my dear child, what *is* the matter ? ” for instead of the usual greeting and impulsive exit from the boat, Faith only raised her head from the cushion back of it and rather tremulously cried, “ Oh, mother dear. I am *so* glad you are here. I did not know what we should do—but now it’s all right ; ” whereupon she resumed her half recumbent position, as if nothing more remained for her to worry about.

“ Don’t be troubled, Mrs. Holland,” said Jack, as he carefully stepped on shore. “ Faith slipped on some logs and I’m afraid something is wrong with her ankle, for it has pained her awfully, and we’ve had to go very slowly and carefully so as not to jostle it. I do hope you’ve not been anxious about her. After the accident it seemed to take ages to get her comfortably fixed in the boat, and it took such a time to get through the creek. Poor child—I am afraid she found it a real *via dolorosa*, with all the dragging and rocks.”

He looked down at her with infinite tenderness—mopping his face—and then shaking himself into shape, added : “ And how in the world did you come here, dear Mrs. Holland ? *Were* you

troubled? Oh! I say, that's too bad. Didn't you know I would bring her back as safely as—well—as I could?" He put out his hands in a half beseeching, half reproving way that again mistily reminded Mrs. Holland of something familiar.

"I knew you would spare no effort," she answered; "but, Faith, can you not get out of the boat? Is the ankle sprained?"

"I can't say, dear, but every time I try to move, it nearly kills me. I never could bear pain, you know, and have frightened Jack nearly out of his senses three times already by fainting. Isn't it childish of me?"

"Not a bit," promptly cried Jack.

"Now, Mrs. Holland, if you say so, I can get Stanley—I see him coming—to help me make an impromptu ambulance, and we can carry Faith wherever you decide she is to go. We can get her to the cottage at Wawbeek just as well as not, and there you can have proper advice."

So they got a carry wagon, and the two men hoisted Faith, boat and all, upon it, mounting guard on either side to amuse her as Stanley incidentally remarked, while Mrs. Holland followed, sole occupant of the carriage, with no one to interrupt the thoughts that were curiously divided

between relief at finding matters no worse, hope of a speedy deliverance for Faith from physical discomfort and the turning over of various perplexing indications that suggested some crisis close at hand.

They found the Deans ready to start on the homeward row and apparently not in the least surprised or alarmed at the outcome of the whole matter.

“Poor dear,” said Mrs. Dean. “It’s too bad, but you will soon be all right, and isn’t it a blessing that Jack was with you? He is so big and strong.”

Faith’s answer sounded thoroughly conventional to most of the party.

“I cannot be grateful enough that he was with me, dear Mrs. Dean;” but Jack Dean nearly fell off the carry wagon under the intoxicating influence of the smile and look directed solely at him.

XV.

WHEN Hillside Cottage was reached the hotel gave no other signs of life than a few lights gleaming from some of the windows. The piazzas were deserted, and no one was in sight.

The men made a chair and carried Faith up the hill and to her own room, where in another hour the house physician had examined the troublesome member, applied his most scientific treatment to it, and left her with the assurance that nothing more serious than a short sacrifice of outdoor pleasures and exercise seemed imminent.

When at last the door closed upon him, and Faith and her mother were alone, they both felt drawn to each other by a subtle and instant intuition.

“Mother, my dear, darling little mother.” Faith put both arms around her mother’s neck and kissed her eagerly, tenderly, on lips and cheek, as if she longed to express an unchanged and unchangeable devotion before acknowledging another.

“Are you comfortable now, dear?” asked her mother, returning the embrace with equal fervor, but determined, if possible, to avert exciting discussions, at least for that night.

Mother-love possessed her, and even the suspicion of an approaching rival struck like a death-blow. She had not yet faced such a possibility in any definite shape. Faith had always been so completely her own that a future apart from her never had been seriously admitted to her consideration. In spite of her eighteen years, she had been her “little girl” in all brooding, tender ways, and until within a few days had seemed as satisfied and complete in her mother’s love as could be desired by either. That some subtle change had come or was pending Mrs. Holland felt, and her heart sank within her. Faith, reading the dear face keenly, perceived the truth, and felt her helplessness to avert the pang.

At that moment she first realized how much her day’s experience involved, for while the spell of Jack’s presence had been upon her there had seemed nothing else in the world but him. Now she felt a new sense of responsibility, and half frightened, accomplished by action what she hesitated to attempt by words. Gently pushing away

her mother, that she might easier reach a little chain about her neck, she unfastened a locket suspended from it and handed it to her mother.

Mrs. Holland took it silently, opened it and examined the face within. At first she could not catch the somewhat faded picture and so turned to the more direct light from a shaded lamp.

A look of great surprise passed over her face as she exclaimed, "My Faith, where *did* you get this?"

Faith did not answer at once. Her lips were quivering and her cheeks were flaming. She never moved her eyes from her mother's, who seemed lost in contemplation of the photograph. Not receiving an answer she finally looked around. "Who is it, dear? I thought when I first looked that I knew the face, and certainly it is strangely familiar."

"Why, mother dear, it is Jack. Look again. Isn't it just like him now? Of course it is familiar. It was taken when he was sixteen and a cadet at a military academy. Just think how he would be without his great moustache and weighing about fifty pounds less, and you could not have a better likeness. Isn't it a sweet expression? Do come over here and talk with me,

mother. I have so much to tell you, and—oh, my dear little mother, I do so want to tell you everything. A girl never realizes how much she needs a mother until she finds out other things. You and I have always been so happy together. I did not believe any one could be more content than we were, and now, dear mother, I am learning a new lesson and—you must learn it with me, as you have all my lessons,”—here Faith stretched out her arm,—“will you not love Jack too? for *I* love him.”

Miriam Holland made no response. She only looked at the picture with a strange intentness, until a grieved exclamation from Faith started her.

Then she sat down on the bed by her, trying to speak quietly, but carried away with every word into a storm of conflicting emotions.

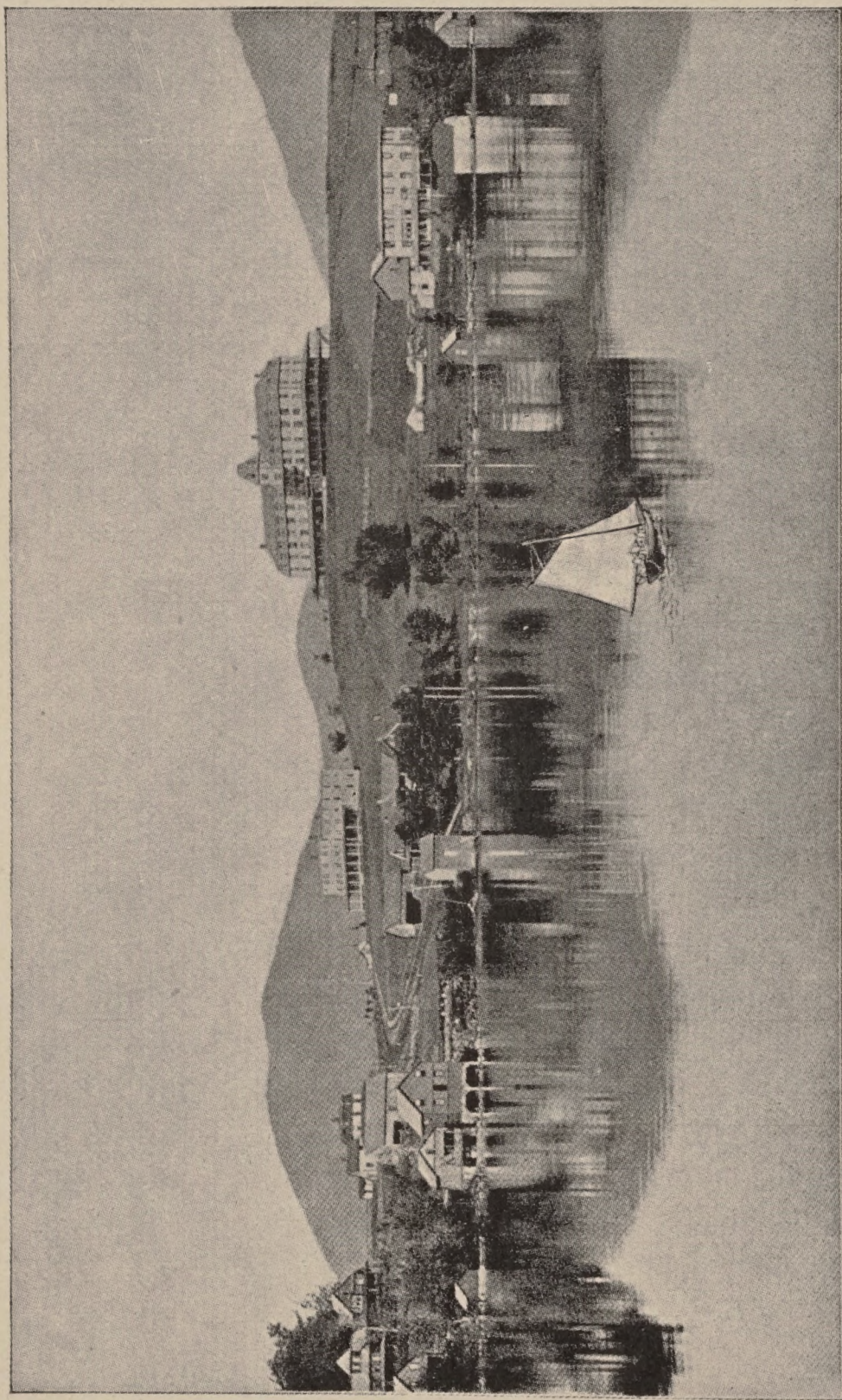
“Jack—you love him? Oh, Faith! My one only darling! my heart’s companion! *Do* you love him? Can you be sure of it in such a little time?”—wherewith they fell into each other’s arms, tearfully caressing, and soothing one another, until, little by little, they both grew calm enough to discuss the situation.

“I did not know myself, mother dear; really,

I did not, until Jack turned away from me as if he was discouraged and going to give up. He looked so miserable—that—it went to my heart—and then,—why, mother—mother—don't you know how it is ?”

“Yes, Faith, I understand. I am trying to be glad with you. I think Jack Dean is a fine fellow, but there are so many things to be considered. How did you leave the matter ?”

Faith laughed. “I didn't have much to do about that. You see, I couldn't help showing him how I felt, and then he told me all about himself, and then I fell and fainted away, and he had that awful time getting me into the boat, and was so *dear* all the way, though it must have been a terrible pull, for I am no light weight now ; and you and Mr. Stanley were at the landing, so nothing more was said—but, mother, he will talk with you to-morrow, and you will be just as sweet to him as you are to me ;” wherewith another tender episode brought to both the realization that they must resign the excitements of the day for the restoring spell of night and sleep, and Faith's last whisper was, “Good-night, dearest of little mothers. I never knew how much I loved you before.”



“They feasted their eyes upon the entrancing view from the Piazzas of the Stevens House.”

XVI.

DAISY DEAN also had her story to tell, but she waited a few days, that Ned Murray might have opportunity to write her definitely. In the meantime Emma had preserved a considerate silence, contenting herself with an unobtrusive watchfulness that in no way became distasteful to her reticent sister.

Emma had her trials.

Never before had Daisy failed to share all her experiences with her, and it was strange and sometimes saddening to feel that Ned Murray's comings and goings were of more vital interest to her sister than her own. Not yet having experienced the absorbing effects of a first and strong love, she could only feel the strangeness of her own loneliness and at times positively disliked Murray, as its cause. But Emma Dean was incapable of any dog-in-the-manger feeling and made the best of things.

As Faith was unable to leave her room for the

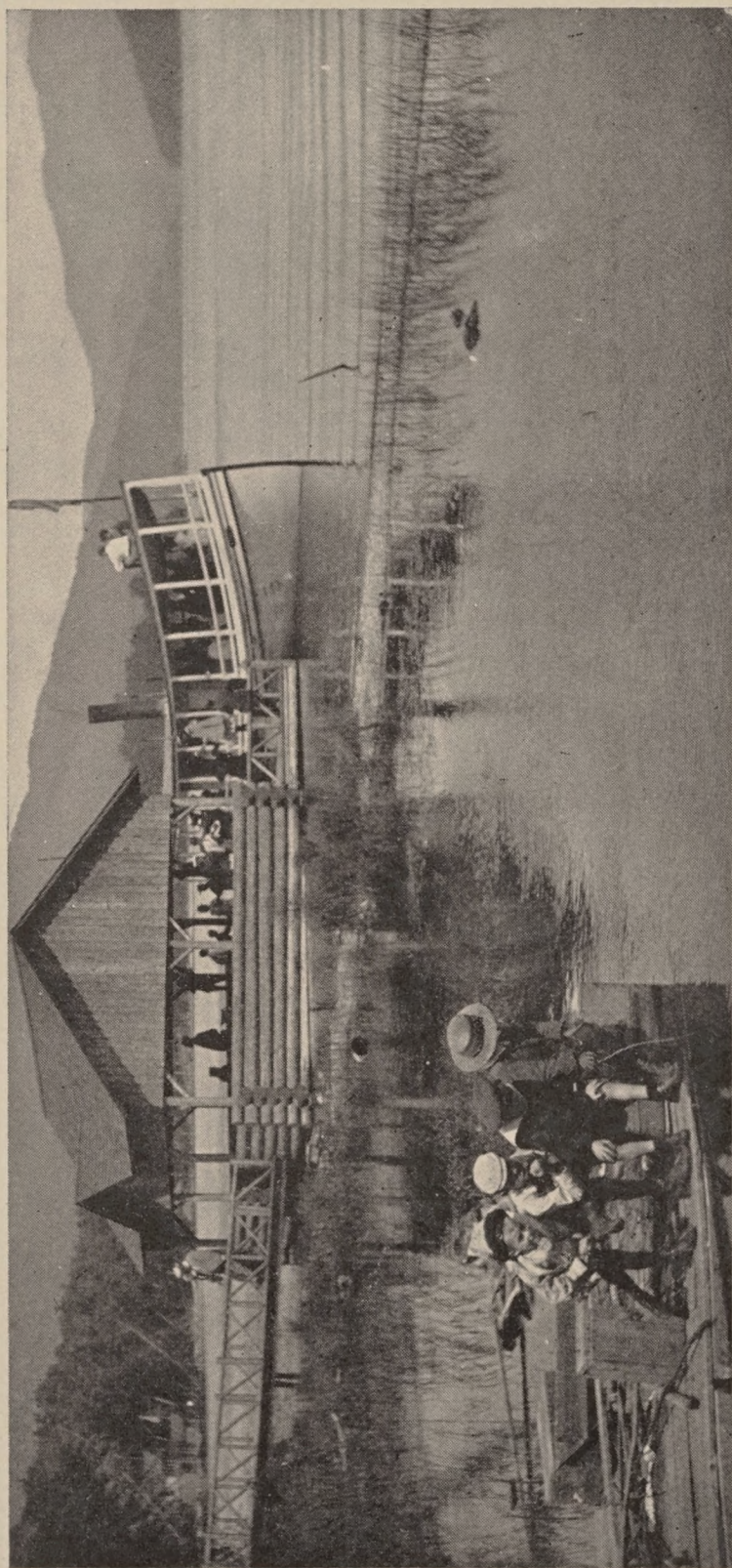
next week and Jack made no pretense of interest in outside things, being most of the time by her side—as she was nested on a lounge by the open window—or acting as oarsman to Mrs. Holland when the latter was sent out for her constitutional, while Mrs. Dean and the girls took her place by the invalid, Stanley was made the escort of any parties formed for the excursions still left upon their list that could not be deferred without danger of being altogether given up ; for September would soon be upon them and the hotels would put on a quite different aspect.

Mrs. Dean, Daisy, Emma and Stanley had thus made a single day inspection of the lovely Lake Placid region.

The day chosen for the trip was made a long and exceedingly interesting one ; the quartette going by launch to the Inn, by stage to the station, a short ride on the Adirondack and St. Lawrence railroad bringing them to the Saranac and Lake Placid road, of but ten miles length, that landed them within a mile of Lake Placid.

Here they hired a comfortable carriage, with driver, and made the charming tour of the twin lakes.

“ If Faith was here she would be like the Irish-



“Jolly White Face Inn.—Where they found some friends.”

man—"struck spacheless" with ecstasy," said Emma, as they dashed along the roads with their western slopes of successive hotels and cottages, and their eastern bank terminating in the Lake Placid or Mirror Lake waters.

The Grand View House beguiled them from the carriage with its promise of extraordinary mountain and country glimpses, and they felt well repaid for their climb.

The Stevens House, standing on the high neck of land that separates Placid from Mirror Lake, next detained them long enough to walk about its piazzas and get the various bird's-eye views, so well known to tourists. Then they went on to the other points of interest about Lake Placid, taking lunch at jolly Whiteface Inn, where they found some friends made the previous winter at "The Pines," Lakewood, New Jersey—who took them out on the lake and showed them some of the camps on the shores.

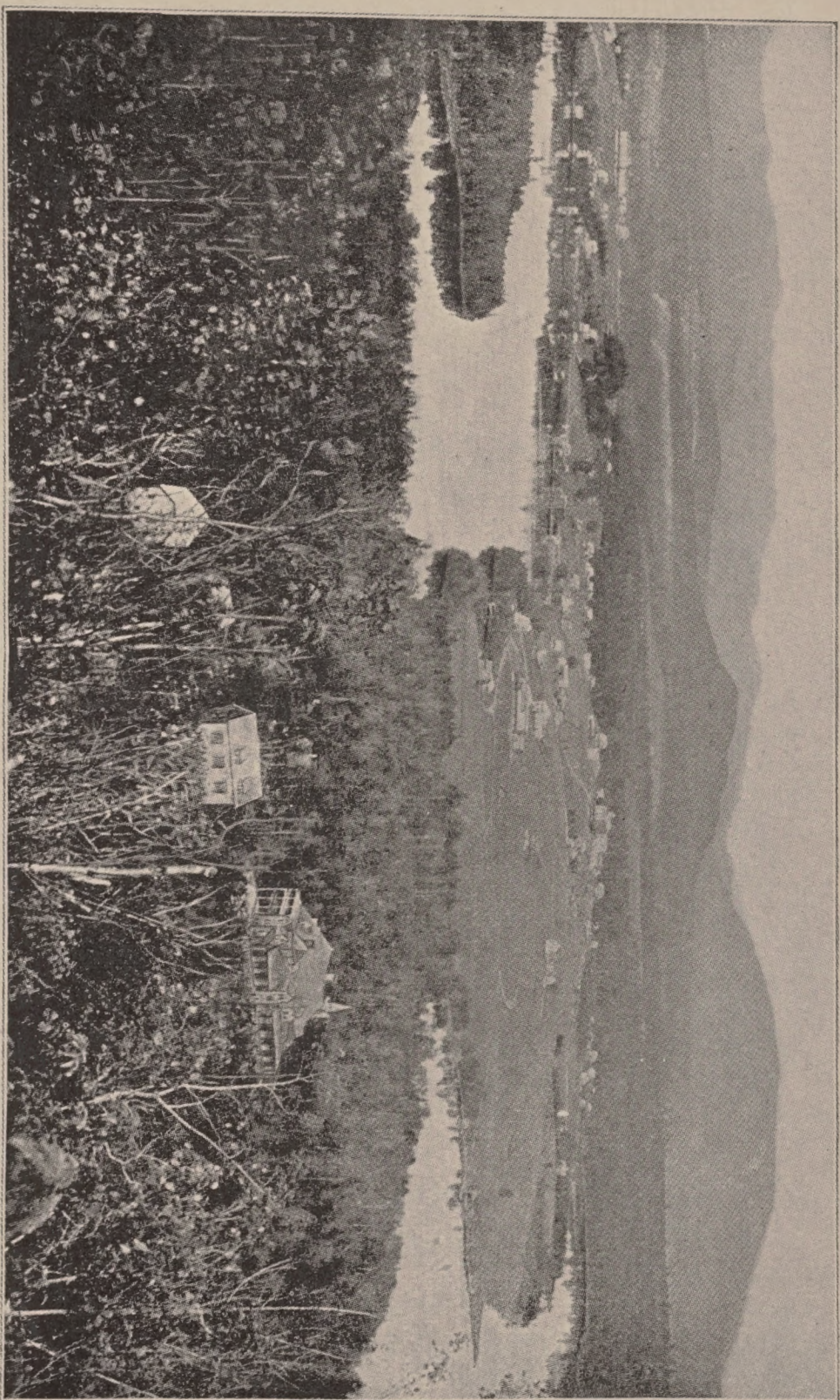
On the home stretch they made one more stop, at the Ruisseaumont, on the east shore of Lake Placid, about two miles from the station, and climbed to its tower,—a goodly vantage point of view—among and above the tree-tops, from which they could look westerly across the lake.

“This house is unique,” said Stanley. “Do you notice that each room has its own piazza?”

“It is a real woodland retreat,” answered Emma, “and a friend of mine who was here last year said they had no end of fun all through the season. Balls and concerts and camp-fires, and all sorts of festivities.”

* * * * *

They could not quite manage to include a visit to John Brown's grave unless they stayed over night, and Daisy made various vigorous protests against that, being anxious to get her letters at the Wawbeek, so they took the train back, reaching the cottage about nine o'clock.



“Across the leafy ocean peeped the Ruisseamont.”

XVII.

A FEW days later, after a refreshing rain had flooded the country and made the earth rejoice, Faith announced herself as ready to go somewhere. “I am all right now, and a change will do me good. Don’t you think so, dear?”

She was alone with her mother and they had just been talking of Jack, and of many half-formed plans.

Jack had given his whole history to Mrs. Holland the very day after the accident, and had been put on probation, so far as any engagement was concerned.

Mrs. Holland had something on her mind. She frankly told Jack that she sympathized with Faith and with him in their desires and hopes. “I thoroughly like you, Jack, dear boy, and I entirely believe in you—but Faith is a young girl and it is not wise to act hurriedly. Be as much together as usual and enjoy each other as you have all summer, but yield to my desire that nothing be

settled until after we get home. That is a good fellow"—with an affectionate pat on Jack's shoulder that made him doubly sure of her good will. With Faith she would talk, but they never got beyond generalities.

She often opened the picture and re-examined it with undisguised interest ; but seldom said anything about it. Faith wondered why her mother was so much interested in it. Still more did she wonder why Mrs. Dean and her mother were not more drawn together since Jack's avowal of his love for her.

The girls had not been told.

Mrs. Holland had never asked either Faith or Jack to keep the matter private, but as nothing was definite, naturally there was no desire on either side to discuss the situation publicly.

On this morning Faith felt like a bird that had been shut up in a cage and was impatient to try its wings.

"Where would you like to go?" asked her mother.

"No one has been to Childwold Park, and the pictures of it are lovely," answered Faith.

"Let us see what Stoddard says about it in his 'The Adirondacks,'" said Mrs. Holland, reach-



“There gleamed the Massawepie and beyond stretched Childwold.”

ing for the little green guidebook. "Why, it's only a short distance from Saranac Inn Station. We can easily go there for dinner and get back here for supper. If you feel like it we will all go tomorrow."

Everybody favored the plan, and for the first time since the Raquette River excursion, the entire party, minus Ned Murray, got out at Childwold Station the next noon and took the five-mile drive to the hotel through a private park that in dimensions, if not cultivation, seemed quite English.

"You can often see deer along here," said the driver, "but after the hunting season opens they know too much to hang around public roads."

When the hotel, across Lake Massawepie, suddenly came into view, everybody exclaimed at its magnitude and picturesque appearance.

"Isn't it a surprise, when you think you are in the heart of the forest?" said Mrs. Dean, as they completed the circling way around the lake to the finely-kept lawns and hotel grounds.

"This is another sort of life entirely from the Saranac's," said Stanley. "They have a large number of the patrons of the hotels in Florida here every season, and the social life is charming."

People get to know each other so well, wintering and summering together. Then some choice house-parties are given in the camps."

"You see the house or cottage next the hotel," he continued. "It is called 'Wohegan Hut,' but really is one of the most luxuriously furnished and exquisitely decorated cottages in the woods. There is a dream of a music-room with polished wooden floor, dull-gold and ebony tints in cushions, rugs and hangings, and a fireplace large enough for a castle hall. Then there is a Turkish tea-room in soft grays and silvery whites, with a maze of delicate fans upon the walls, and cosy tables covered with rare china enticingly nested among divans and lounging chairs, and next it a card-room that must be seen to be appreciated. This enticing 'Hut' is but one of many belonging to the same host and hostess, the others being on an island across the lake, where 'Roof-tree Camp,' 'Bachelor's Roost' and 'The Dining Hut' are kept in constant readiness for guests the year around; and the wine and provision cellars are stocked with sufficient to meet a six months' siege."

"I wish we could see it all," said Faith.

"Nothing easier if we were to stay a day or two. I am fortunate enough to know the hospitable

owner and his admirable wife—but one can hardly take by storm such an establishment.”

They wandered all over the cleared woodland, lawn-tennis grounds and pleasure buildings, except Faith and Jack, who prudently contented themselves with a row on the lake, a peep into Mrs. Ingold's day-camp—one of the finest in the Adirondacks, furnished in rustic work, where a five o'clock tea-table often forms the *raison-d'être* for a sunset gathering—and a happy *tête-à-tête* all through the too short hours permitted them, before retracing their balsam-scented way to the station.

As they stood on the platform watching the train's approach, Emma commented upon the logging camp near by, and, laughing, asked Stanley if sentiment could live under such conditions. The rough log-houses and sheds, with their mud-banked foundations, unpainted fences and smoky interiors, through the open doors and windows of which could be seen women hard at work, did not suggest much poetry, but a young girl, leaning against a corner of the nearest building, her black braids tied with vivid scarlet ribbons, and her plain summer gown of antique fashion and coarse material clinging to a buxom figure, was

gaily chatting with a stalwart teamster, and neither of them seemed to see or hear anything about them.

“Sentiment?” said Stanley, “yes, plenty of it, and there too,” he added in a lower tone, as the train stopped and a familiar voice was heard.

“Hello, Jack! How are you, Ned? Isn’t this luck? I had no idea I should see any one here that I knew.”

“Ned Murray!” cried everybody, as they hastened to find seats and then proceeded to ply him with questions.

Daisy carried herself with charming dignity and composure, accepting the chair next Murray, but showing no undue desire to monopolize him in any way for the short ride to the Inn station. When they were settled in their favorite back seat on top of the coach, and Emma and Stanley were again their protection against interruption, she looked into his face with a thousand questions in her eyes.

Under cover of that friendly screen, with only the birds and branches of trees above and behind to see or hear, Murray answered them all as fast as looks, frequent caresses and words permitted.

The words were the least important translation of his story.

“Yes, my dearest . . . I am back again with just ten days’ leave of absence . . . and then we must say good-bye to America for a while. Are you quite willing to keep your promise? oh Daisy ! what a happy man I am.”

And Daisy also found words much less satisfactory, on the whole, than other mediums of expression, but after a mile or so of the way was accomplished they fell into a serious talk concerning present and future plans.

“I told mamma and Emma all about it yesterday, Ned, while we were out together on the lake. They were just as sweet as they could be to me, and—isn’t it queer, they didn’t seem a bit surprised at anything?”

Ned laughed. “Well, dear, I expect no one will be much surprised at the main fact. We have not been particularly lacking in good taste, that I know of, but still I dare say we have given ourselves away sufficiently to make the announcement of our engagement anything but unexpected. Did you tell the rest, Daisy, or did you leave that to me?”

“I began at the very first chapter,” said Daisy

with evident pride. "I was quite determined they should know I had not made such a quick surrender as this summering would be. I even told them how you fished me out of the lake three years ago, and all about the correspondence too. So you see I am through with confessions."

"Yes?" answered Murray with suggestive tenderness, followed by exclusively personal applications.

"And did you tell them what I was coming back for? We have but ten days, Daisy."

"I talked it over, leaving them the little time they could have to get used to the idea, so now you must do the rest. It is pretty hard for us all, Ned. Mamma is always ready to listen to reason, and so is Emma, but they both feel unwilling to consent to so sudden a marriage.

"Jack is with me any way," said Murray. "I've been clever enough to get him on my side, and—Daisy, you will stand by your promise?"

The subject could no longer be discussed, for Dan was stopping the coach at the Inn door and there was only time for Daisy to say, "I will do whatever you and mamma agree upon, Ned. I'm sure you can make everything happy and comfortable."

XVIII.

THAT evening was a gala time at the Wawbeek, in which the entire lake region was interested.

The manager had arranged a grand benefit for the Adirondack Sanitarium and announced a concert and a ball to which the whole country was bidden. The steamer was run from the Inn, stopping at the camps all along the way for passengers. Camp fires burned in front of each clearing, sending ruddy curling tongues of light against the tree shadows and across the water, while a young moon completed the exquisite picture.

The grounds of the Wawbeek were illuminated in various places by huge bonfires, and men were stationed on the most prominent points and furnished with colored lights which they burned at short intervals, giving a fairy-like effect to the whole scene.

The Wawbeek itself glowed with lights from

turret to basement. The dining-hall was transformed into a concert-room, and afterwards into a ball-room, and the covered piazzas into a cool and spacious banqueting hall.

Flowers from nature's slopes and valleys were banked in halls, parlors and music-room. Balsam boughs, golden-rod and purple asters clustered everywhere, and, as a new arrival exclaimed, the whole place seemed like an enchanting dream.

No wonder that lovers felt the world their own under such conditions.

"Lady B." told Mrs. Holland she envied any mother with daughters. "It is such a happiness to see them enjoy life." Mrs. Holland sighed, and then, reproaching herself, smiled, but with effort.

"You have not known the perfect happiness of a daughter's companionship, and so cannot measure the pain of even sharing it," she said, feelingly.

They were sitting in a corner of the improvised ball-room and for the moment were free to talk without restraint. Circumstances had drawn them closely together, and a strong mutual confidence and admiration had grown into a comfortable friendliness. Lady B. knew the trend of

Mrs. Holland's thoughts and said : " I never had a daughter. Nevertheless I understand fully what you mean. There is no escape from that keen suffering, but, like all experiences, it has its compensations, and time will reveal them to you. I'm a poor preacher," she laughed, somewhat sadly. " I cannot practice well enough to comfort any one much, but still—you must be fond of that handsome manly fellow," indicating Jack Dean with a slight nod of her beautiful head.

Mrs. Holland assented warmly.

" He is all I could ask for—only I cannot feel the need of anyone in that capacity for a long while yet."

" Lady B." laughed again.

" It is no use, my dear. You cannot postpone young people's romances to your own convenience. Call it Fate, or Providence, or what you will. When the time comes an army of mothers do not count."

XIX.

GREAT was the excitement all through the Upper Saranac region when the rumor first went abroad that there was to be a wedding in the Island Chapel on September twelfth.

It leaked out through the servants who accidentally overheard a discussion of some of the arrangements at Hillside Cottage, and was wondered over considerably before sundry engagements of guides, boats, flowers and wedding breakfast at the hotel were made.

The first week in September was cold, rainy and windy, as it often is. The foolish ones fled to the cities, assuming autumn to have come to stay. Sportsmen arrived to fill their places, impatient for the tenth, when they could let loose their dogs and bag their game without fear of the law.

The new woman, ambitious of aim and practiced of eye, planned for her prey, of more than one sort, and meanwhile tramped up and down the piazzas and breasted the lake winds in efforts to keep in good condition.

Blossom Bungalow became the Mecca of the Hillside Cottage party, and its mistress the hourly comfort of everybody, for now that Daisy's plans were publicly announced, no one seemed so indispensable. Large experience in life, practical knowledge of what was correct and the best ways of attaining it, with a positive genius for decoration, made her advice and assistance invaluable, and she seemed to enjoy giving unstintedly of both.

The girls were in a whirl of excitement, and Emma and her mother found the days too short for the letters that must be written, and the arrangements of a purely practical character that no one else would attend to.

Naturally the lovers were apt to prove unreliable—both sets of them—for Jack managed to get almost as exclusive possession of Faith's society as Ned did of Daisy's, although only by sufferance. Mrs. Dean knew enough of her son's wishes, and was content enough with their probable attainment to give herself no anxiety either pro or con.

Naturally she was absorbed in Daisy's present needs, and was the last one to yield assent to the Island Chapel wedding. She would have much preferred opening the great country house in

Stockbridge, where her ancestors had lived and died for generations back, and where their social world was close at hand.

“But it would take a month to get ready, and if these impatient children insist upon sailing on the fifteenth, it is no use thinking about that,” she had declared.

“It is not Ned, nor it is not me, mamma, that you must blame, but that horrid man who is making so much trouble for everybody over in Paris. We shall be fortunate if he does not succeed in carrying out his plans and leading Ned a hot chase across the continent. I couldn’t refuse my poor boy anything when he was in so much trouble, for you see his father is all mixed up in the matter, and nobody but Ned knows enough about it to act effectually. Mr. Murray is the very salt of the earth—but a man that is easily imposed upon ;—and this scoundrel very nearly ruined him. When Ned went away that morning he did not know what would be the result, but *he* is too clever for rogues to manage.”

During the intervening days before the wedding, after the sun shone again, and the inevitable term of September heat changed the whole Adirondack atmosphere into a glory, and the uni-

versal expression into rejoicing that no city environments had beguiled them away, Mrs. Holland and Faith made up their minds that they would go down the Raquette River and Long Lake to the Grove House, where a young friend of Faith's was staying. It was a two days' trip, and Jack was much torn between his desire to go with them and his sense of duty toward his family, which made leaving them at this busy time inopportune.

Faith settled the matter for him.

"I will not even invite you, Jack. You cannot be spared from here, and, besides that, it will do you good to be without me for a while."

Jack distinctly resented this statement, but yielded as cheerfully as possible to the inevitable.

So they parted in the fresh early morning, at the boat-house landing, Faith and her mother, with their guide, turning southward to the well-known Indian Carry, while Jack devoted himself to whatever was needing his attention at the cottage. It was one o'clock that noon when the guide pulled them up to the Island House landing for dinner and a rest.

"The chief beauty of this lake is splendid old Seward, mother. Is it not?" said Faith. "The shores are pretty all along, but that mountain

seems to take up the whole northern horizon. It looks perfectly huge. Flagg, is it not larger than any other mountain about here?"

They had rested an hour and were again in the boat, passing the Platt Camp on the east shore and the Duryea Camp nearly opposite.

"Wa-al, I guess Seward covers more ground than any of um," answered Flagg. "Marcy, 'n McIntire, 'n White Face air higher than what Seward is. Stoddard calls Seward number eighteen in his book, and I guess he knows es much es anybody about um. But ter my eyes Seward is es pretty a mountain as anybody wants ter look at."

"This lake seems so much more remote from civilization than the Saranacs," said Mrs. Holland. "I think I would like next year to go through to the great heart of the North Woods, where it is really wild and bold."

"You'd orter go to Blue Mountain Lake," said Flagg. "It's fine all around there."

"Next season we will, I hope," said Faith, inwardly wondering how large a party they would be, and glancing at her mother to read her thoughts.

Mrs. Holland's face wore a mask. Faith thought

it often did lately. She could not understand, but hoped and waited.

As they passed Long Lake Village, Faith asked the guide what business was carried on. "It seems quite a place. How do they occupy themselves during the long winter months?"

"Some lumbers, and some farms, and more hunts and guides. There's a few stores and a good many fine boats come from about here. We think our Saranac Lake boats can't be beat though. I make boats in the winter," he modestly announced.

The Grove House proved to be above the great house they had seen for some time, that stood out on a bluff on the east shore, some four miles from the head of the lake.

"That is the Sagamore," said Flagg. "It is a regular big hotel with room enough for two hundred and fifty folks. A real nice place. You can take a coach there to Blue Mountain Lake—only nine miles. That's the Lake House just below, and I guess you can see the Grove House among them pine trees. David is one of the nicest men in the woods. Everybody likes him. That's the owner—David Helms. He's a first-class hunter, an' guide too, he is. Half of these fellers that

calls themselves guides air jest nothing but rowers. They don't know nothing about guiding—but David is fust-class."

They were warmly welcomed by a sweet-faced girl who was waiting for them on the little landing, over which Faith proceeded to spread her imposing length in the futile endeavor to step out of the boat after a four hours' cramped sitting.

The united efforts of guide and by-standers rescued her from an impromptu bath, and they went up to the pleasant living-room in the cottage next the hotel, where a jolly fire snapped in the stone fireplace and pretty cosy furnishings betrayed the touch of womanly taste.

"Oh, I am so glad you have come. This is such a dear place, and the people are so friendly and kind," said the young hostess.

That evening after supper they went out to the open camp, but a step from the house, where a foot or two of balsam boughs were packed all over the floor and the great camp fire roared in front. It made a weird, brilliant, fitful blaze accompanied by a musical roaring and crackling. The men of the hotel kept it well supplied with material, and the camp floor was occupied with recumbent figures whose eyes were fixed on the glowing pile

and whose ears devoured the stories from any of the group inclined to talk.

“Isn’t this glorious?” said Faith. “It is so exactly suitable to the place. I wonder why we do not have camp-fires at the Wawbeek?”

“You would not care for them so much there,” said her mother. “In the first place you are always dressed for the drawing-room in the evening and then it is not cold enough. Remember, this is September, and a fire is agreeable even indoors, now.”

A tall figure joined the group just then and somebody called out, “Hello, Uncle John—glad to see you. Sit down here in this chair. Boys, stir up the fire—let’s get Uncle John to tell us about Murray.”

“That’s Murray’s guide,” whispered Faith’s friend to her. “He loves to talk. Speak to him.”

Faith left that delicate mission to her mother, who was formally introduced and then carefully drew out the old man.

“So you really knew Mr. Murray, Uncle John?” she said, as a starter.

“Yes, ma’am. I guess I knew him ’bout as well as anybody did. I guided him the first season

he come into the woods and kep' it up as long as he did."

The old man laughed when he was asked if all the Adirondack tales were founded on facts.

"Wa-ll—I ain't er goin' to say nothin' about that. Murray was a great scholar an' had a lot of imagination, sartin, but he knew what a gun could do, and could beat any man I ever see that wa'n't brought up in the woods, at shootin' or fishin' or handlin' a boat. That's the truth. An' he was the handsomest feller I ever see come out of the cities."

"Uncle John Plummer is one of the oldest inhabitants of the Long Lake Regions," supplemented Faith's friend. "Isn't he wonderfully straight and strong?"

"I suppose it is the life out of doors that keeps all these guides in such splendid health," answered Faith.

They left the Grove House early the next morning by carriage and took the pretty drive to the Long Lake Village landing, where their boat and guide met them, and the trip up the lake and back to the Saranac was accomplished, with the rest at Raquette Falls and the walk across the carry to the river, in seven hours. At half-past

four they were at the cottage and inspecting a large package of letters. At least Mrs. Holland was. Faith was interviewing Jack Dean on the piazza in front of their sitting-room. He was telling her about the music he had ordered for the wedding festivities.

“The trio, with Victor Harris at the organ, will play for a half-hour before the wedding procession enters. We found a piano at one of the camps that can be carried to the chapel. Stanley and I have made an appointment with two of the guides, to spend the afternoon of the eleventh in decorating the place. It will be nothing but balsam and golden-rod ; and the twelve bridal boats are to be canopied with pure white awnings and decorated with the same flowers. I had to send away for the boats. Guide boats are not heavy enough. The chapel invitations have to be carefully made out and everybody is admitted by card. It’s going to be awfully pretty if only the weather keeps fine.”

“What *will* you do if it should be stormy ?”

“The best we can ; just have it here ; and of course the breakfast will be at the hotel. Why, what is the matter with your mother ?”

Faith hastily turned and looked toward the

window where Mrs. Holland had been reading her letters. She still sat there, but was no longer reading. Her face was white, and she seemed to be suffering.

In a moment Faith was at her side.

“What is it, mother?” she anxiously asked.
“Are you ill?”

“No—no, dear; not ill. I shall be all right presently. I think”—vaguely looking about the room and clutching the letters in her lap—“I think perhaps I am tired. I will go to my own room.”

She got up feebly and walked across the room falteringly, Faith vainly trying to relieve her of the mass of correspondence.

“Let me put them on your desk, dear, and you lie down for a while.”

But her mother insisted upon carrying them herself and locking them in a private drawer where she kept all her valuables.

Then she submitted to Faith's ministrations and was tucked away on her lounge and left in quiet and darkness to try and sleep, while Faith sped across the grounds to consult the house-physician, who pronounced Mrs. Holland's condition a very natural result of such a severe tax upon her strength as the too long trip she had just taken.

“She is so much stronger than when she came here that she sometimes forgets there is yet necessity for prudence,” he added. “Keep her quiet for a day or two and I think she will be all right.”

* * * * *

Left alone, Miriam Holland reviewed her life. Sleep was undesired. She wished only for silence and opportunity to think. How could she do her duty and still save her child from suffering? A few weeks ago she had resented the approach of a rival in the affections of her daughter. Now, she was ready to make any honorable sacrifice to secure that rival's success.

“If I only could get that will and read it again,” she thought.

There seemed no way out of the tangle. The will was in a safe in Cambridge. The house was closed. Richard Patton knew only what Leigh Wadsworth had told him. She must read his letter over again.

Creeping from her lounge, she first locked the door and then swiftly opened the drawer and took from it a thick letter. Re-locking the drawer she unfastened her door and returned to her lounge.

In the dim light of the heavily-curtained room she found great difficulty in reading the closely-

covered pages, often stopping and hiding them, as some sound threatened an interruption, but returning to her investigation as soon as relieved of anxiety.

It was a long and detailed letter and seemed to convey little comfort.

“I’m sure I do not know what to do. If it was a mere matter of business—of money—it would be hard enough. As it is, it seems perfectly hopeless to try and meet Leigh’s wishes. One thing I must do. I must keep the whole matter from Faith until we get home. It would be cruel to burden her with such questions in the midst of all these bright days. Poor child ; I know how she will take it.” And hiding the letter under the pillows, Mrs. Holland bravely tried to calm herself, and prepare for the ordeal before her, of carrying a smiling face and misleading her dangerously keen and sympathetic child, until the safe and proper time arrived for explanations and decisions.

That she succeeded was but another proof of what a mother’s love can do and bear.

XX.

NEVER did the sun shine brighter than on that twelfth of September and never did the Adirondacks witness a lovelier spectacle than that bridal train winding its way across the blue Saranac, a living chain of grace, beauty and color. In the first six boats were relatives and friends, each boat containing four guests and two rowers.

The seventh and eighth carried the four ushers and four bridesmaids, the latter dressed in cream-tinted cloth gowns with golden-rod embroidered on vests and about the high collars, and wearing Rembrandt hats, of the same tint, trimmed with white flowing plumes and wreaths of the chosen flower. They carried large bouquets of it, too, tied with creamy ribbons, and seemed the very incarnation of the sunny, regal blossom.

In the remaining boats came Mrs. Holland, Mrs. Dean and "Lady B."—a quartette of pretty children carrying baskets of flowers, the groom and his best man, Stanley, and the bride—in sim-

ple, snowy white, veiled and statuesque, accompanied by her maid-of-honor, Emma, and Jack, who gave her away.

The lake and its shores were peopled by on-lookers from miles about. Guide boats, fishing boats, launches, and the Saranac—to say nothing of the useful but not strictly beautiful “Loon,” lingered about the Island until the solemn service was over and the bridal train had made its return trip to the mainland and disappeared within the Wawbeek dining-room, where more flowers, boughs and ribbons decorated the handsomely set forth wedding-feast, and congratulations mingled with witty and mirth-provoking sentiments, intended to disperse the inevitable shade of sadness that ever hangs over approaching separations.

Never had such music been heard in the woods as Victor Harris and the trio evolved at that chapel wedding.

It could be heard from shore to shore, so crystal clear was the day, and so vibratory the surroundings. The air seemed palpitating with it. One of the guides told his next patron, who came a day or two after, that “it beat anything in the way of music that I ever heard ; an’ what with all the pretty girls an’ handsome clothes an’ fixin’s

seemed just like a dream you expect ter wake up out of and don't want ter."

When the launch moved away from the dock, a few hours later, carrying the bride and groom and a number of their guests up the lake to the Inn, *en route* to the outside world, radiant Ned Murray cried to Jack, "Don't forget to plan for next summer in time to count us in, wherever we are."

Daisy—beautiful, as happiness, youth and hope make fair women—looked a thousand times more than she dared trust herself to speak, and bravely smiled her good-bye as those on shore gave three long and hearty cheers "for Mr. and Mrs. Murray."

"*Bon voyage!*" shouted Jack—adding *sotto voce* mainly for Faith's benefit—"and may we soon follow your admirable example."

XXI.

ONE week later the log fires in Hillside Cottage were blazing merrily, for Jack Frost was painting his vivid colors upon the leaves and grasses and the mountains were vying with the sunset in glory.

Mrs. Dean and Mrs. Holland were comfortably seated in the parlor busying their fingers with embroidery and their thoughts—as soon became evident—with much the same subject.

Acting upon a sudden impulse the former asked :
“Where are the girls ?”

“At Blossom Bungalow, playing cards. Do you stay at home this winter ?”

“It depends largely upon Jack who I fancy may have plans of his own,” with a questioning look at Mrs. Holland, who made no answer but kept her eyes on her work.

Mrs. Dean drew herself up a little, dropped her silks in her lap, and speaking with marked restraint, said :

“I really think we mothers might confide in

each other a little, my dear. Jack says nothing, you say nothing, and Faith says nothing—to me. I dislike forcing the subject upon you, but—would you mind telling me if there is any reason why my boy is not acceptable to you, if he proves so to your daughter ?”

“ I am very fond of Jack,” promptly answered Mrs. Holland—dropping her work also and looking as earnest as Jack’s mother did dignified. “ As you have spoken of this matter I would like to tell you that it would be a great relief to me if I could see his wishes happily consummated. I have never said anything to you about our financial affairs——”

Here Mrs. Dean made a gesture of protest.

“ What can that have to do with the question ? Jack has a good profession, and there is money enough for all. When Mr. Dean left me the care of his fortune he considered it a sacred trust for his adopted son as well as for our daughters, and left the management and time of settlement entirely to my judgment. As the property would lose much of its value by division, I give an ample income to each of the children and they feel perfectly independent. If Faith and Jack love each other, why not let them be happy in an early marriage ? I believe in them—don’t you ?”

“Yes, indeed I do—when all things are favorable—but I must ask you to hear a little of my story, and then you can understand my position better.

“You do not know that I was married very young and was left widowed, before I was of age. From my girlhood, I had a friend who always seemed like an older brother. He was an intimate friend of my husband’s, and after his death did all in his power to assist me in settling his badly involved affairs. A few years later he offered himself, much to my sorrow; and when he realized how impossible that hope was, he seemed to be unable to bear the disappointment—left the country, and stopped all communication with me or mine. His unquestionable suffering made me very unhappy, for I valued him highly as a friend.

“I never heard anything more of him until, within the last year, Faith came into possession of all his property,—after his sudden death in Bombay,—by a will made years ago.

“There was a wish expressed in that will which may influence the matter of Faith’s marriage.

“Last week I received news from my lawyer that an intimate friend of Mr. Wadsworth’s, who

was absent from Bombay at the time of his death, had just forwarded to him a letter found in Mr. Wadsworth's private desk, on the outside of which was written, 'To be opened by Richard Patton, No. — Court Square, Boston, in case of my death. Leigh Wadsworth.' With this letter, which Mr. Patton enclosed to me, he also sent another, written by the same friend, in which he told of stumbling upon a man in Australia who had proved to be a fellow-passenger of an older brother of Mr. Wadsworth's. The letter went on to tell of a chapter in the Wadsworth family-life that, strangely enough, was also developed in the one written me by Leigh Wadsworth—under cover to Mr. Patton.

“It seems that Leigh Wadsworth had an older brother—a very much beloved brother, who, before I knew him, was inveigled into marriage with a miserable woman, who literally ran away with him, out of the country, leaving no trace behind them. The years passed, and Leigh coming into all his father's fortune, tried in vain to discover his brother's fate, in the meanwhile managing matters so wisely as to greatly increase the property. When he made the unfortunate mistake of falling in love with me, and determined to

leave the country, he made the will referred to, and because of his sense of justice and his keen desire also to make my future free from anxiety he simply asked that, should any other legal heirs to his father's estate be discovered, their rights might be considered as equal to Faith's. In the second letter Mr. Wadsworth's friend gives the history of Leigh's brother after he settled in Australia, which explains his never having been found by his American friends.

"He changed his name upon his arrival in the new country and was known there only as John Greyson."

"JOHN GREYSON!—*oh, my poor dear!!*" cried Mrs. Dean, springing to her feet and raising both her hands as though appealing to a visible presence. She evidently entirely forgot Mrs. Holland, and the latter, startled out of all her train of thought, seemed spellbound as she watched her.

"Oh, how you must have suffered—poor, sensitive, tender-hearted man! And you never told me half! never, never."

Then she suddenly realized that she was not alone and forced herself to calmness.

"Mrs. Holland, have you a picture of Leigh Wadsworth?" she asked,—“but wait a moment.”

Passing into her own room she returned with a small ambrotype held open in her hand.

“Do you know that?” she asked, as Mrs. Holland looked at it.

“Why, I can hardly tell,” she answered. “It is very like him. The same eyes, the same forehead, and—no, not the mouth—but it is *very* like him.”

“That was my first husband—JOHN GREYSON—John Wadsworth, really—and—Mrs. Holland—can’t you see? do you not understand? Jack—Jack Dean is his child. Oh, my dear—my dear. How strange, how wonderful! Let me think a moment—and then I will tell you my story. No—I am not that dreadful woman! I was a girl of nineteen when John Greyson, as I knew him, first came to my father’s house in Australia, on some business. He was a widower then, and ten years older than I. We were thrown together a good deal by circumstances and learned to love each other; but there always was a shadow upon him that nothing quite dispelled. When he offered himself he told me frankly that I must accept him, if at all, willing to trust in his honor, and to leave his past untouched upon, for that was buried.

“No one could look into John Greyson’s face and question his nobility of nature. His faults were all lovable. He couldn’t battle with unprincipled people, and believed every one as true as himself. Once he told me that if he could live to make an independent fortune we would go back to America, and I should have my rightful place among his old friends—but he was not strong when we were married, and even the happiness of our short life together—only six months—failed to save his life. I think he intended telling me his entire history before he died, but his weakness increased so rapidly that there never was an opportunity.

“My father took me home, after he went, and when Jack came——”

“Jack came!” repeated Mrs. Holland—as if she had not yet grasped the truth.

“Yes, when Jack came I was glad that he looked so like his father. He is like him in all of his fine qualities.”

The two women drew nearer to each other; Miriam Holland full of eagerness; Mrs. Dean, full of tender memories. Neither of them could quite understand the other yet.

“But Mr. Dean?” said the former,

Those words acted like magic upon Jack's mother.

“He came to Sidney when Jack was two years old and—when he returned to America I came with him as his wife, and Jack as his adopted son. He was a noble man, too, and never made Jack feel his rights in the family group as anything short of those of a cherished child. Indeed, Jack never knew he was not his own son until after he died, six years ago.” She now grew brighter, and turning squarely about, put her hands on Miriam Holland's shoulders.

“Don't you *see* how wonderful this all is? How stranger than any fiction is this solution of your problem? What could be sweeter, happier, more just?—Jack's boy will make Leigh's plans not only possible but perfect.”

Mrs. Holland's reserve now melted quite away, and, from that moment, the two mothers threw aside all constraint, and when Faith came in she stopped short, in her amazement at seeing the change in her mother's face.

All the lines of care and anxiety had disappeared. Her cheeks glowed like a young girl's and, strangest of all, she and Mrs. Dean sat hand in hand—like two sisters.

It was a happy group that lingered long over the glowing logs that autumn night, and it was a happy couple that outstayed the others to make mutual promises, bearing upon the future that now seemed so rose-colored.

When they parted Faith said, “But Jack, dear, we must never forget to watch over our mothers—they *are* such sweet things.”

“I don’t understand why you were so worried after all, dear—knowing that I have Jack. What if some other man *did* take this money?” said Faith to her mother, in her room, still later.

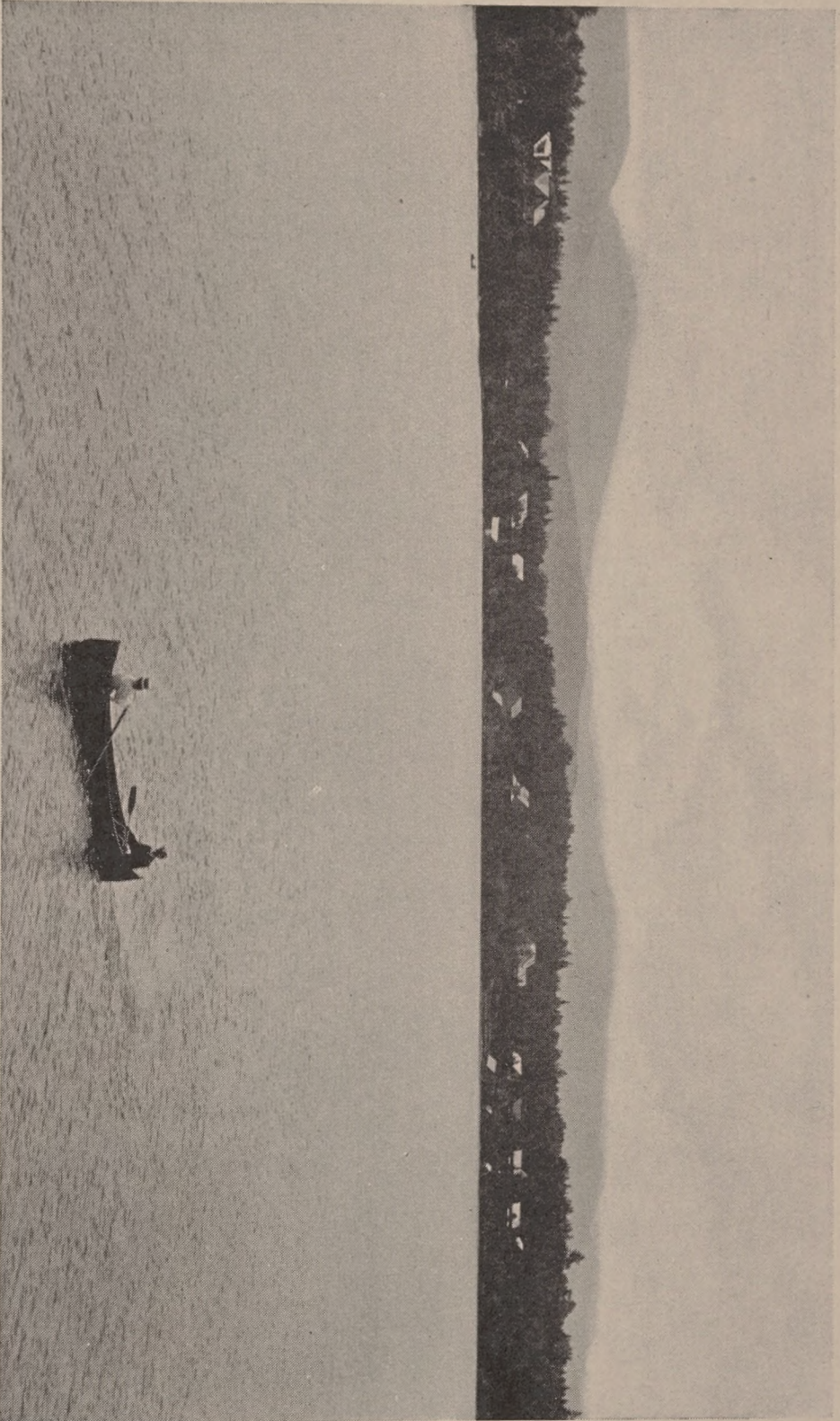
“I did not tell you all there was in that letter, Faith. It was not the money that I thought so much of. Leigh Wadsworth’s love for me made him dwell upon the idea of ministering in some way to my happiness, and yet, his sense of justice compelled him to provide for the interests of his brother, if he should be found—or his brother’s family, if he had any. There was a clause in his letter that expressed the hope, in case his brother had a son and that son ever became known to you, that you would deal as kindly with him—as lovingly—as you could—for my heart’s desire is to see the child of my only love at the head of the house of

my fathers.' So he wrote, and—knowing your keen sense of honor, and not being quite sure that this affection for Jack would prove all that you both thought it—is it strange that I felt unnerved by all the responsibility ? ”

Faith smiled, a little sadly. “ I am afraid, dear little mother, that you had good cause to doubt my stability—at least until since my accident. I did not understand how much I was learning to depend on Jack until he carried me away that day, and I fell so helplessly into his tender keeping. But do you think I would give him up now ? Not for ten thousand millions and all the wishes ever wished by your good kind old friend,—but we will be just as nice to his nephew as we can be—won't we ? ” laughing merrily. “ And no wonder you were always seeing something familiar in Jack's looks and ways. His picture that I have looks so like his father's—and you couldn't tell which ambrotypes are which, the two brothers are so wonderfully alike. Oh, it is a remarkable story—and—I'm so thankful I'm in it ! ”

* * * * *

It was the first of October when the Wawbeek closed its doors and Blossom Bungalow and Hill-



“A last pull on the lake.”

side Cottage were left to the sole companionship of nature's varying moods.

For the last trip of the season the launch whistled "time up," as the Hollands, Deans, "Lady B." and Stanley took their places, with others, for their homeward journeys.

For the last time they reviewed the whole lovely amphitheatre of slopes and forests.

"Good-bye, beautiful mountains; good-bye, Wawbeek—for this year," cried Faith. Then she turned to her lover, her eyes glistening, and her lips trembling—"Jack," she whispered, "does it seem possible that it is only ten weeks since we came in?"

He bent down and answered her with vehemence, "It cannot be measured by weeks, my darling, it is all my life."

THE END.

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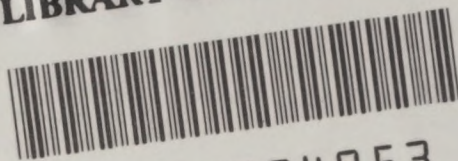
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